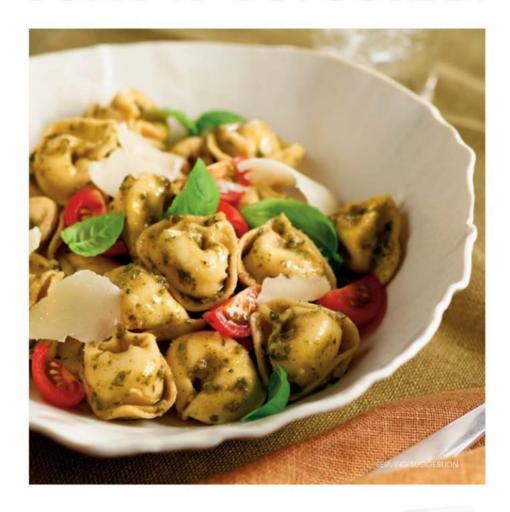


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# SAVEUR





#### DINNER IN THE PIAZZA

70 For a resident of a small village in northern Tuscany, where ritual and tradition are fiercely guarded, the invitation to contribute a dish to an elaborate communal meal is a long-awaited rite of initiation.

By Beth Elon

#### SWEET, HOT

82 Cinnamon's cherished role as an ingredient in homey dishes like apple pie constitutes only a portion of this spice's worldly potential: still harvested entirely by hand throughout Asia, cinnamon and its close cousin cassia bring nuanced sweetness and heat to a vast array of foods.

By Sara Dickerman

#### COVER

Lamb rib chops with mint salsa verde.

PHOTOGRAPH BY TODD COLEMAN

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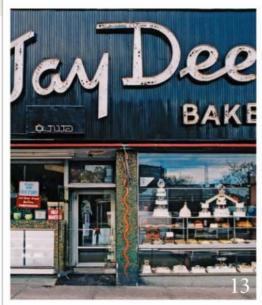
#### UNDERSTANDING LAMB

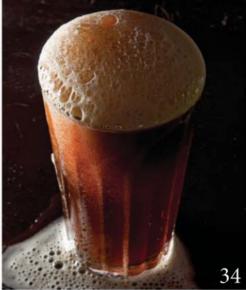
48 From wine-braised baby lamb in Paris to delicately spiced kibbeh in Beirut, this versatile meat is a cornerstone in countries all over the world. Our special feature includes 15 recipes, a guide to lamb cuts, breeds, and regional varieties, and more.



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: H. ARMSTRONG ROBERTS/RETROFILE/GETTY IMAGES; ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI; LANDON NORDEMAN

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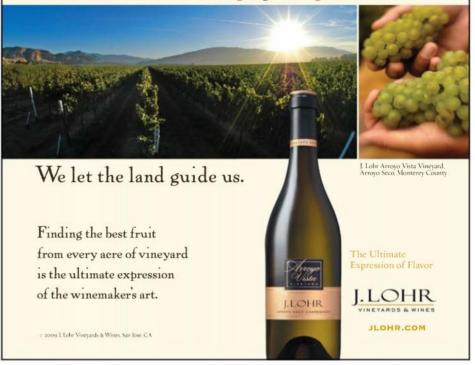
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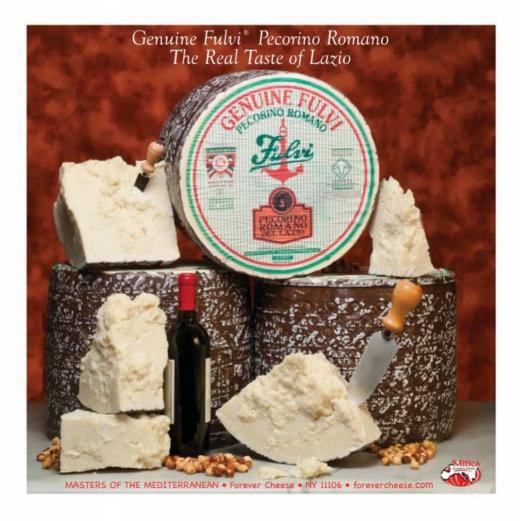
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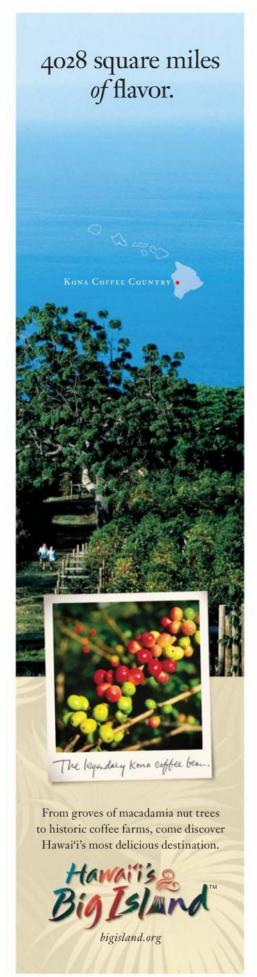
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FIDST

# FIRST

# Wide, Wide World

Our new website opens its doors

THERE WAS A TIME, not too long ago, when nothing rattled a magazine editor's nerves quite like the two little words website redesign. It's not that a project like this wasn't exciting, but it was an exercise in the unknown, full of techno terms like database architecture and page impressions that were alien to the subjects we knew intimately and loved. Back then

most editors, including me, were grappling with how to use the Web to our readers' best advantage. When Saveur.com launched, in 2000, it was pretty much an online edition of the

print magazine, with a robust, searchable archive of recipes. Even after a few redesigns, we didn't dramatically break form.

Fast-forward to the present: food content on the Web is like nothing we could have imagined a decade ago, a world of limitless generosity where bloggers, chefs, restaurateurs, farmers, foragers, gardeners, writers, poets, and others freely share their

discoveries, helping one another become better cooks and more curious eaters. Like almost anyone who loves food and has a computer, we at SAVEUR spend a lot of time exploring this endlessly fascinating online universe.

So, when the phrase website redesign started floating around the office again about a year ago, we embraced it, but we had to take a collective time-out when we found we were getting caught up in how to protect our online niche from our so-called competitors—Foodandwine

The home page of the new Saveur.com, foreground, and its honorable predecessor. .com, Gourmet.com, and other sites. Wait a minute, I said, we're a *food* magazine, people! We're in the business of exchanging ideas about good cooking, interesting ingredients, delicious meals—all those things that make our lives richer. It may sound a bit Age of Aquarius, but the essence of what we do isn't about keeping the good stuff to ourselves; it's

about passing the plate.

The upshot of that epiphany? Check out the new Saveur.com and see for yourself. The freshly redesigned site still offers articles and recipes from the magazine, as well as exciting Web-exclusive content, all organized

under helpful rubrics like Techniques, Travels, and Wine & Drink. That's just the first course, though. Feast your eyes on "Daily Fare," our daily roundup of food finds, recipes, cooking tips, destinations, and other intriguing reads gleaned from every corner of the Web. Next to, say, a recipe for preserved lemons from Sunday Suppers, a terrific

blog written by a Brooklyn chef-photographer team, you'll come across a tip from the Seat-tle-based writer Anita Verna Crofts about a new taco truck plying that city's streets. "Daily Fare" is also a forum for SAVEUR's own team of bloggers: chefs, butchers, sommeliers, and other passionate food people. We've expanded our approach to recipes, too, combining great SAVEUR recipes with inspiring dishes that we've discovered online.

It's all part of our mission to bring you the best, most authentic food out there. So, point, click, cook, and eat—and let us know what you think. —JAMES OSELAND, Editor-in-Chief





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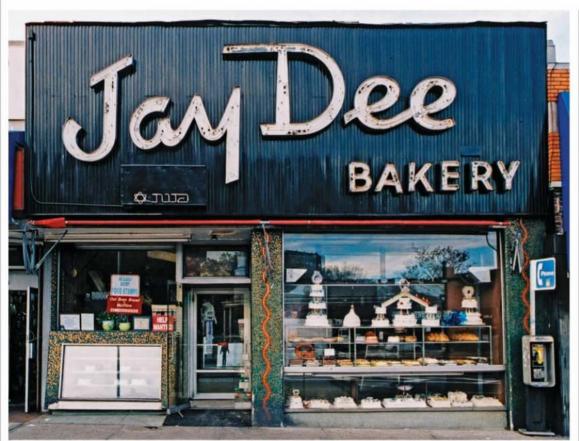


Spices in artwork:

Vanilla bean, paprika, thyme, rosemary, cream of tartar, chives, tarragon and fines herbes.

# FARE

Memories and Marvels from the World of Food, plus Agenda and More







Before it closed, in 2007, the Jay Dee Bakery (top), on Queens Boulevard in Queens, New York, was known for its cookies and tiered cakes. The M & G Diner (above left), a beloved soul food restaurant on 125th Street in Harlem, closed in 2008. Esposito's (right), a family-run butcher shop on Ninth Avenue in Manhattan, is still going strong.

# Signs of the Times

Family-run food shops keep the past alive

TE WALK OR DRIVE past them every day: the oldfashioned bakeries with the phrase "pastry shop" adorning the façade in aluminum cursive lettering; the butcher shops with the name of the owner's family neatly painted on the front window. Too often, it's only after one of those old establishments is replaced by, say, a Dunkin' Donuts that we realize just how reassuring, how quirky and beautiful, their storefronts were. Strung together along a city block, they're urban art: timepieces that speak to the history and craft behind these food businesses. Two New York photographers, James T. and Karla L. Murray, make a strong case for preserving these relics in Store Front: The Disappearing Face of New York, a book of the couple's work published in March by Gingko Press. The Murrays were drawn to the colorful, fanciful signs that announce the names and wares of these mom-and-pop shops. Since the couple started working on the book, in 1998, more than half of the 226 stores they documented have closed. But some—like Russ & Daughters, a tiny, 95-year-old shop selling smoked fish and other traditional Jewish delicacies on New York City's Lower East Side—continue to be run by younger generations of the family. The Murrays hope FARE

1850s, Verdi had become not only a well-known composer but also a successful farmer and a renowned cook. "If only they knew how well he composes risotto alla milanese," wrote his wife, Giuseppina Strepponi, in a letter describing a standing ovation he received upon a visit to Turin's Teatro Regio. To his favorite singers, he would often send a pork shoulder, with a handwritten recipe attached.

When Verdi traveled, he took great delight in discovering local foods (of the town of Cremona, he wrote in a letter, "The torroni,

the mostarda...good heavens!"), but he also took the foods he loved along with him. In 1862, he and Strepponi went to St. Petersburg for the premiere of La Forza del Destino and had a railway car loaded with pasta, Parmigiano-Reggiano, and prosciutto di Parma sent from Italy and a carriage of French red wine and champagne sent from Paris.

Still today, Verdi's operas, from Rigoletto to Aïda, bring food to mind for many Italians. Around Parma, locals say, "The music of Verdi is like a pig—nothing goes to waste." In other words, it's all good. -Fred Plotkin

CHICCHE VERDI DEL NONNO

(Gnocchi with Brown Butter and Sage) SERVES 4-6

- 1 lb. russet potatoes, unpeeled Kosher salt, to taste
- 4 oz. spinach
- 11/4 cups semolina flour, sifted, plus
  - eggs, beaten
- tbsp. unsalted butter
- leaves fresh sage, minced
- tsp. freshly grated nutmeg Freshly ground pepper, to taste
- tbsp. olive oil
- tbsp. finely grated Parmesan
- Put potatoes into a 4-qt. pot of salted water; boil. Reduce heat to mediumlow; simmer until potatoes are tender, 25 minutes. Drain; let cool. Peel potatoes; pass through medium plate of a food mill into a bowl.
- Meanwhile, heat a 12" skillet over medium-high heat. Add spinach and 1 tbsp. of water; cook until wilted. Press on spinach in a sieve to extract liguid. Finely chop spinach; stir together with potatoes and semolina and form a well in center. Add eggs and salt and, using a fork, beat eggs into potato mixture. Transfer dough to a work surface dusted with semolina; knead to combine. Divide the dough into 6 portions. Roll each portion into a 1/2"-thick rope. Cut ropes into 1/2"-wide pieces; transfer to semolina-dusted sheet tray.
- Melt 10 tbsp. butter in a 10" skillet over medium heat; cook, swirling, until butter browns, about 6 minutes. Add

sage and nutmeg; season with salt and pepper. Remove from heat; set aside.

4 Working in 4 batches, add 2 tbsp. butter and 1 tbsp. oil to a 12" skillet over medium-high heat. Add dough pieces and cook, flipping once, until golden brown, 3-4 minutes. Transfer to a baking sheet. Wipe out skillet and repeat with remaining butter, oil, and dough pieces. Toss dumplings and brown butter sauce in the skillet until hot. Serve sprinkled with Parmesan.



## **Everyone** Loves Elsie

How a heifer won America's heart

🌈 Y MOM GREW up on a dairy farm in upstate New York but settled in St. Louis, a city with little room for cows. Still, she found space for one small heifer: Elsie, the Borden Dairy mascot. When I (continued on page 17)

**Iberian Gem** The New Portuguese Table (Clarkson Potter, \$32.50) by David Leite, a prolific food journalist who founded the website LeitesCulinaria.com, is the best book on the subject of Portuguese cooking in years. Leite, whose parents emigrated to the U.S. from Portugal, is captivated by the way cooks there have pointed their underappreciated cuisine in new directions. He dutifully catalogues Portugal's iconic wines and traditional foods-we learn how to make

clams and chouriço in a copper cataplana—but we also get decidedly new-school preparations like cheese-stuffed pork tenderloin and Filet-O-Fish-inspired salt cod sandwiches. Trad or mod, this is some winning home cooking. -The Editors

that their book helps convey the enduring value of spots like Russ & Daughters. "When a place like that closes," Karla says, "the neighborhood just isn't the same." —Dana Bowen

# **Bella Cucina!**

The story of a hungry maestro

PERA AND gastronomy share an illustrious history, from the elaborate post-performance suppers that have given many opera stars their famous girth to the classic dishes, like chicken Tetrazzini and peach Melba, inspired by great musicians. Many composers and performers have been known for their appetites, but the Italian composer Giuseppe Verdi may have been the greatest food lover of them all.

Verdi was born in 1813 in the tiny town of Roncole, in the province of Parma, where his parents ran an osteria that was a popular overnight stop. There, in Italy's agricultural heartland, he was nourished by the regional dishes his mother served, like chicche (pronounced KEE-kay; pictured above), tiny spinach gnocchi sprinkled with the local Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, as well as by the stories he heard from travelers about the great theaters of northern Italy. By the





WHATEVER THE OCCASION



**ALWAYS RIGHT** 





FARE

(continued from page 14) was kid, our dining room housed an Elsie shrine: vintage signs, toy milk trucks, and salt and pepper shakers, all of them bearing the image of that grinning, long-lashed bovine beauty. They were antiques, my mom told me, too fragile to touch,



but I couldn't help myself. When Mom wasn't around, I'd herd all the Elsies out to the table to play.

I wasn't the only one unable to resist Elsie, I later learned; she's one of the most recognized food icons of the modern era, right up there with the Pillsbury Doughboy and Snap! Crackle! and Pop! But for farm families like mine, she was more than a corporate logo; Elsie

#### **One Good Bottle**

At its finest, the richly aromatic Tuscan dessert wine known as vin santo-literally, holy wine-is an alluring amber drink worthy of its name. One of the noblest examples is Avignonesi Vin Santo di Montepulciano (\$170), a complex wine with lingering flavors of dried figs, apricots, almonds, tobacco, and hints of citrus and vanilla. The winemaker Paolo Trappolini follows the time-honored method in making this specialty, drying white malvasia, trebbiano, and grechetto grapes on straw mats, then pressing the wine and aging it for a decade or more in small oak barrels. Tuscans serve vin santo at the end of a meal with biscotti, but it's equally seductive as an apéritif, partnered with aged pecorino. -Nancy Harmon Jenkins

was an ambassador of the American dairy industry who made people think about where their milk came from.

The talking cow began appearing in advertisements in the late 1930s (usually alongside her "husband," Elmer the Bull, the mascot for Elmer's Glue, which was owned by Borden at the time). But it wasn't until the 1939 world's fair in New York that Elsie became a household name. Borden had planned on impressing fairgoers with its Rotolactor, a futuristic milking machine, but, as James Cavanaugh, who worked the exhibit as a young agriculture student, recalls, "People would point at the cows and say, 'Which one is Elsie?'" Cavanaugh, now 92, considered the 150 cows before him and picked the one with the most personality, a pretty Jersey from Brookfield, Massachusetts.

Brown Jersey cows are known among farmers not only for their looks and personality but also for their rich milk. That Borden chose to make Elsie a Jersey felt like vindication to farmers who raised the breed, which produces less milk than the more common Holstein. My family has always been loyal to Jerseys: legend has it that my great-grandfather once sent away a suitor of my grandmother's for raising Holsteins, and I have a stash of photos of him with Elsie lookalikes, including one (above) with my great-grandmother, taken at the fair where Elsie made her debut.

After the fair, Elsie became a bona fide celebrity: she made the rounds on the county fair circuit, appeared in movies, had a public pregnancy, and, in 1952, "wrote" Elsie's Cook Book ("with the assistance of Harry Botsford"). Jane Nickerson, then the food editor of the New York Times, reviewed it on the same day she reviewed Elizabeth David's now seminal French Country Cooking. (Elsie's recipes got the kinder reception.)

Alas, Elsie doesn't get around much anymore; her image and

#### **AGENDA**

OCTOBER

#### **LONDON RESTAURANT FESTIVAL**

London, England

For this week of street fairs, films, and events honoring London's restaurants, double-decker buses will transport diners on a progressive feast hosted by 1,000 participating establishments. At Leadenhall Market, the chefs Richard Corrigan and Fergus Henderson will prepare a traditional English Sunday lunch and a hog roast for 400. Information: www.london restaurantfestival.com.



OCTOBER

18

#### **BLUE FOOD FESTIVAL**

Tobago, West Indies

This celebration centers around dasheen (also known as taro), a starchy tuber ubiquitous in Trinidad and Tobago that turns a distinctive bluish gray when heated. Cooks compete to make the most innovative use of dasheen in everything from liqueurs to ice cream; music, beer, rum, and locally fermented spirits are also on offer. Information: www.visit tobago.gov.tt.

OCTOBER

#### **BEEF: FROM PLAINS TO PLATE**

Chicago, Illinois

Scholars, culinary historians, writers, and chefs come together for this symposium, hosted by the Greater Midwest Foodways Alliance, that chronicles the fascinating history of beef in the region. Learn about local production, cattle barons, the famous Chicago stockyards, halal and kosher butchering, and more. Information: www.greatermid westfoodways.com.

OCTOBER

#### **BOSTON VEGETARIAN FOOD FESTIVAL**

Boston, Massachusetts

One of the largest vegetarian food festivals in the country enters its 14th year. Sample black bean empanadas, veggie pâté, organic hemp milk, and vegan marshmallows from more than 60 food vendors. Visitors may taste food prepared by vegetarian chefs and cookbook authors. Information: www .bostonveg.org/foodfest.

OCTOBER

#### **DEBUT OF THE HOME MICROWAVE OVEN**

Mansfield, Ohio, 1955

The Tappan Stove Company was the first to harness microwave technology-once the province of military radar technicians-in the service of home cooks. The original microwave oven designed expressly for the consumer market cooked bacon in 90 seconds and retailed for a whopping \$1,295.



#### FARE

the Borden name are owned by a large dairy conglomerate called Lala Foods. But whenever she crosses my path, I think of her as an early avatar of today's farm-totable movement and a cheerful advocate for family farms (where Jerseys are being raised in greater numbers than ever before). As my mom put it when I asked her what she saw in Elsie, "She was a farm girl who took her message to town." —Jenni Avins

# Wild Edibles

The evolution of safari food

N A SWELTERING morning last November, I awoke in the middle of the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, at the gateway

to the Laikipia Plateau nature reserve in Kenya, to the aroma of freshly baked bread. Outside my tent, Hezron Ayodi, dressed in a crisp white chef's toque and a green apron, was tending a tin stove buried deep in the still-smoldering coals of the previous night's fire. From the oven, he proceeded to remove a tray of freshly baked scones, which were paired with a breakfast spread that included local specialties, like papaya drizzled in lime juice, and not-so-local ones, like fresh croissants, also baked in that open fire.

There's something inherently incongruous about eating this well out in the bush. Safaris have traditionally meant hunting, and

Images, right, from the author's Kenya safari meals, which were prepared by a team of chefs overseen by Hezron Ayodi (top left).











Six



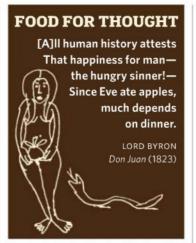


ingredients

safari cooking used to signify just one thing: fresh meat—antelope, elephant, giraffe, or even (in the famous case of Ernest Hemingway) lion. But even in the earliest days of the African safari, meat from the day's hunt was often supplemented by comforts that hunters and explorers took along with them and prepared in the bush. For a yearlong trek across the Kalahari Desert in 1849, Dr. David Livingstone towed along two wagons' worth of food, including 300 pounds of coffee, 400 pounds of sugar, and copious quantities of mustard, cheese, and brandy.

Not long after that, wilderness meals became a much more lavish affair: in 1908 a hunter named Abel Chapman chronicled a meal of marrow soup and gazelle cutlets made decadent with puddings of corn flour from Glasgow and peaches from Australia, all served alfresco on a table "smart in clean white napery and brightly-burning lamps." A year later, Teddy Roosevelt embarked in Kenya with a staff of 500, which prepared feasts of wildebeest from mobile kitchens. In 1904, the Nairobi-based safari operator Newland, Tarlton & Co. pioneered "champagne safaris," sumptuous hunting trips featuring pâté and caviar imported from London. Before long, bush planes were shuttling indulgences like ice cream into the wilderness.

In the mid-20th century, when the conservation movement effectively brought the era of the hunting safari to a close, the cooks whom tour operators hired were forced to get creative. "The idea was 'Don't shoot with a gun; shoot with a camera," says Geoffrey Kent of the London-based travel company Abercrombie & Kent, the safari operator that



organized my trip to Kenya. "So we couldn't rely on hunters for fresh meat." In 1962, Kent built the first refrigerated safari truck to offer fresh food. In those years, the cuisine was classically British: beef Wellington, Yorkshire pudding, treacle tarts.

Today, chefs like Ayodi, a 68-year-old Luhya tribesman

from a village near the safari base who has worked as a safari chef for more than 40 years, prepares meals more ambitious than ever: fresh olive bread made with local wild olives, a savory lentil pie, slow-cooked lamb shanks, and more. Sure, some of the food represents the kind of pan-global culinary trends you find in resorts everywhere—Thai beef salad and mango crêpes-but Ayodi also culls from the local larder and from culinary traditions he grew up with. Two of his standby dishes are pumpkin soup flavored with coriander and a Kenyan white cornmeal porridge called sadza.

P. 19

Despite the challenges of cooking outdoors, Ayodi says, his work is no different from that of a chef working anywhere. "We just try to make food so people feel at home," he said, as an ostrich walked by. —Andy Isaacson







spoon.



Introducing the poetically simple ice cream from Häagen-Dazs.

#### FARE

#### STATE PLATES: MISSISSIPPI

"TO UNDERSTAND THE WORLD, you must first understand a place like Mississippi," said the native son William Faulkner. The best way to do that, if you ask me, is to eat. Here is a cross-section of Mississippi's soul-stirring culinary landscape. —Ben Mims

# Southern Glories

#### **MUGSHOTS**

The best burgers in the state are served on grilled sourdough buns at this college hangout in Starkville.

#### MAYFLOWER CAFÉ

This Greek-American restaurant in Jackson serves a top-notch version of the city's beloved "comeback" sauce, a tangy salad dressing and all-purpose dip popular across the state.

#### **1 THE CROWN**

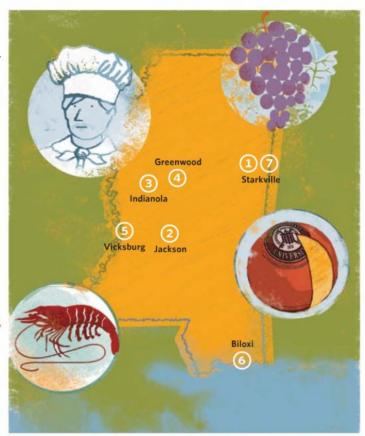
The catfish pâté and catfish Allison (a whole filet gratinéed in a scallion cream sauce) have kept this Indianola restaurant going strong for 33 years.

#### **4** THE CRYSTAL GRILL

Since the 1920s, people have traveled from all over the state and beyond

■ More Missisippi food at SAVEUR.COM /ISSUE123

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: MICHAEL KRAUS; TODD COLEMAN; ARTHUR SCHATZ/GETTY IMAGES; COURTESY VIKING RANGE CORPORATION; I



for the gumbo, fried pork cutlets, and mile-high meringue pies at this Greenwood restaurant.

#### **6** WALNUT HILLS

This restaurant in Vicksburg serves fried chicken, mustard greens, and other Southern fare in a renovated private home.

#### **6** BRUNO'S CAFÉ

Biloxi's freshest crab, oysters, and Gulf shrimp can be had at this eatery tucked inside a seafood and meat market. Try the po' boys.

#### MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY AT STARKVILLE

The dairy at this university's noted agriculture school makes a mean muscadine ripple ice cream with local grapes and an outstanding Dutch-style Edam cheese beloved by Mississippi chefs and home cooks.

**SOUTHERN GENTLEMAN** Craig Claiborne, probably the most fondly remembered food editor and restaurant critic for the *New York Times*, was born in Sunflower, a town of 1,000 in the heart of the Mississippi Delta, in 1920. The soulful cooking of his mother, who ran a boardinghouse with the help of African-American cooks, instilled in her son a consuming love of food. In 1987 he published *Craig Claiborne's Southern Cooking* (Times Books, 1987), a loving return to his roots that features many of the state's most cherished home-style dishes, from Mississippi mud pie (a dense, brownie-like dessert) to chicken spaghetti, a creamy noodle casserole.



**Keepers of the Flame** The building contractor Fred E. Carl Jr. started the Viking Range Corporation in Greenwood 25 years ago to manufacture professional-style stoves for home kitchens. Viking has since put his hometown (population 16,000) on the global culinary map: in addition to its 600,000-square-foot factory, Viking operates a cooking school, a retail store, a restaurant, and an award-winning hotel and spa.

#### Ask a Local

Amy Evans, an oral historian for the Southern Foodways Alliance in Oxford, expounds on two beloved Mississippi foods: catfish and tamales (yes, tamales).

Why is catfish so popular in the state? When no one else ate it, cooks here loved it. It's plentiful in the riv-

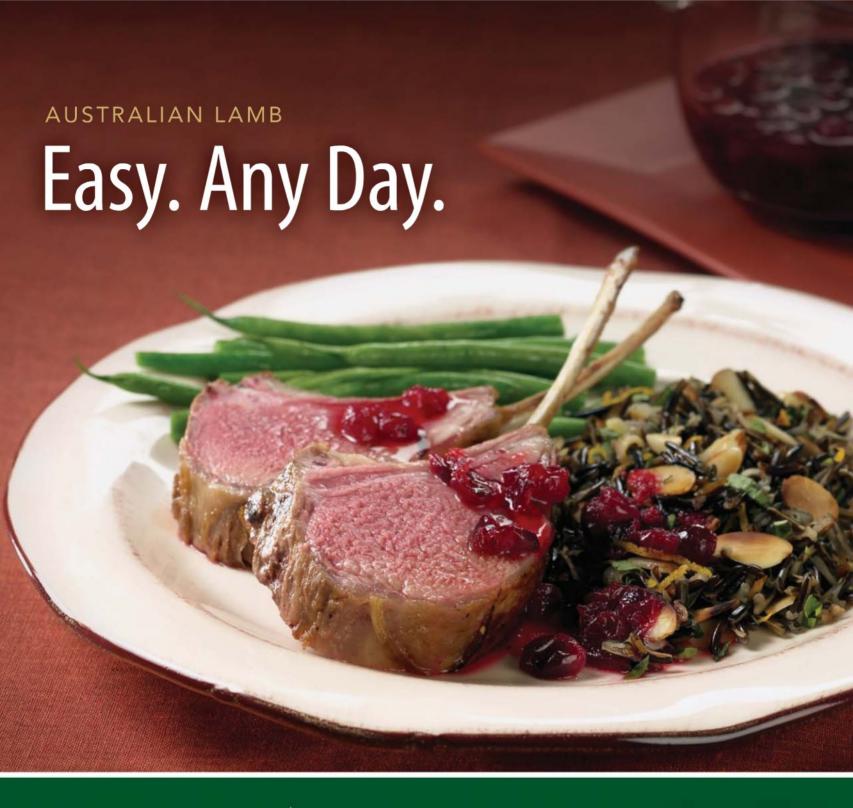


ers and lakes, and we raise more of it than any other state. At restaurants you find it broiled, fried, barbecued; we even have catfish pâté.

And tamales—aren't they Mexican?
Mexican laborers introduced them in the 19th century, and African-American cooks started selling them. Now there are tamale restaurants all over the Delta.

Any favorites? Scott's in Greenville and Joe's in Rosedale are darned good.

(See THE PANTRY, page 99, for info on waffles, vin santo, and Mississippi.)



cranberry-marinated rack of aussie lamb with almond wild rice



FAMILY FAVORITE



6 SERVINGS



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## **BOOK REVIEW**

# **Urban Legend**

For the chef David Chang, creativity trumps authenticity

#### BY SARA DICKERMAN

TRIED TO EAT at Momofuku Noodle Bar, David Chang's first restaurant in New York City, a few years ago. Pregnant and in high heels, I stood on the sidewalk with other would-be diners for what seemed like hours, peering through the window at the happy few who were perched on stools and basking in the comfort of Chang's glorious ramen and pork buns. Eventually my feet gave out.

**MOMOFUKU** 

Momofuku (Clarkson Potter, \$40). Coauthored by Chang and the food writer Peter Meehan, the book has given me an intimate sense of how Chang cooks and why his food must taste so good.

Though many serious chefs have trumpeted their fondness for fast, informal fare, few have staked their careers on it as Chang has, and none to such acclaim. What Chang sensed when he opened Noodle



e out. se

As a West Coaster, I always seem to be witnessing Chang's career from the outside: the ever growing archipelago of New York restaurants I've never been to (Momofuku Noodle Bar, Momofuku Ssäm Bar, Momofuku Ko, and Momofuku Bakery & Milk Bar, at last count) and the steady stream of ecstatic reviews and culinary awards. So, I wel-

SARA DICKERMAN's most recent article for SAVEUR was "Kitchen Experiential" (April 2009). She lives in Seattle.

comed the arrival of the cookbook

Bar was that people wanted to eat very well but that they also craved spontaneity and informality. Nowadays, whenever I see a trained chef open, say, a late-night taco stand, I know he's been drinking in some of Chang's enthusiasms.

Chang's own coming-of-age story—that of a Korean-American from Virginia finding his way in the world of professional cooking—is told in engaging conversational prose: from his abbreviated apprenticeships in New York and Tokyo (he was dumped by one Japanese chef for his devotion to the wrong

noodle; "You're either soba or you're not," the master decreed) to the refinements of the two-Michelinstarred Ko (smoked eggs with caviar, shaved frozen foie gras), which he opened last year.

Chang is an ardent eater, and his book is in no small part a validation of the fatty, stickyfingered, beer-slaked fare that you might find in Seoul, Tokyo, or Chengdu: dishes like pork rinds, ginger-scallion noodles, and fried chicken, which Chang has recently added to the Noodle Bar menu (in both battered Southern-style and triple-fried Korean-style versions). "I love, love, love, love fried chicken," writes Chang with his typical zeal, which is often offset by a touch of Larry David-esque self-loathing. "I will eat the worst fried chicken and love it."

Chang has absolved himself of the sometimes burdensome quest for authenticity. His is a hip-hop cuisine, intensely urban, globally sampled, pulsing with overlapping beats of umami, pork fat, and comfort-food nostalgia. The ramen broth I made from the cookbook had the customary kombu (kelp) and pork bones but was also flavored with a pound of bacon. I

Win a copy of Momofuku at SAVEUR.COM/WIN. See page 99 for details.

found myself drawn to simpler recipes like that one and the one for his addictive soy-pickled mushrooms. Still, the assemblage of ingredients seemed epic at times: when I made Momofuku's ramen, I was brewing broth, seasoning sauce, roasting pork belly and shoulder, and slow-poaching eggs (a nifty trick) for most of a weekend. Still, diving into the bowl made me feel as if I'd won the lottery or, less likely, found an empty bar stool at one of Chang's restaurants.

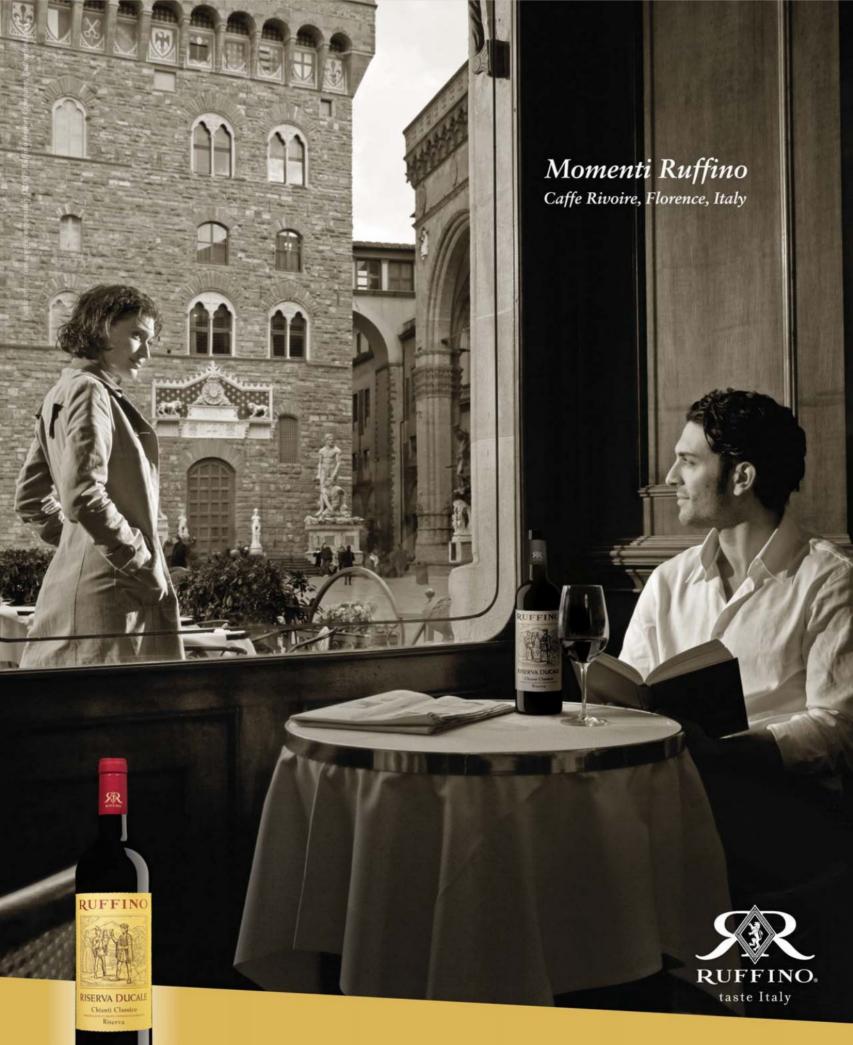
#### PICKLED SHIITAKES

MAKES ABOUT 6 CUPS

These soy-and-sherry-marinated dried mushrooms (near left)—based on a side dish served at Momofuku Noodle Bar, in New York City—taste great sliced and served on grilled steaks

- 4 cups dried shiitake mushrooms (about <sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub> oz.), stemmed
- 1 cup light or dark soy sauce
- 1 cup sherry vinegar
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 2 3" pieces fresh ginger, peeled

Put mushrooms into a medium bowl, cover with 5 cups boiling water, and press mushrooms down with a plate to keep them submerged. Let steep for 15 minutes. Strain mushrooms through a sieve set over a medium bowl, reserving 2 cups liquid. Combine mushrooms, reserved liquid, soy sauce, vinegar, sugar, and ginger in a 4-qt. saucepan; bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer. stirring occasionally, about 30 minutes. Remove pan from heat; let cool. Transfer ingredients to a 11/2-qt. container, cover, and refrigerate for up to 2 weeks.



## SOURCE



# **Fine Meats**

Salumeria Biellese's dry-cured marvels

BY HUNTER LEWIS

Several Years ago, while working as a line cook in a New York City restaurant, I tasted a salami unlike any I'd ever come across. Called cacciatorini, it was a rustic, cured pork sausage with a strikingly complex flavor and a surprising tanginess. "What part of Italy is this from?" I asked the chef. "The part that's 17 blocks from here," he replied. The salami had come from Salumeria Biellese, a small producer and purveyor of cured meats located in the Chelsea neighborhood, where proprietor Marc Buzzio's family has been selling some of the best sausages in America since 1925.

The Buzzios hail from the Italian province of Biella, near the French border, and when Marc's father, Ugo, moved to New York, he brought recipes for sausages like boudin blanc and soppressata with him and started selling them in the shop and to local restaurants. Marc has continued to develop relationships with some of the city's best chefs and worked with them to re-create old-world specialties that have not been widely available in the United States, such as guanciale (cured pork jowls), which the shop makes for the chef Mario Batali.

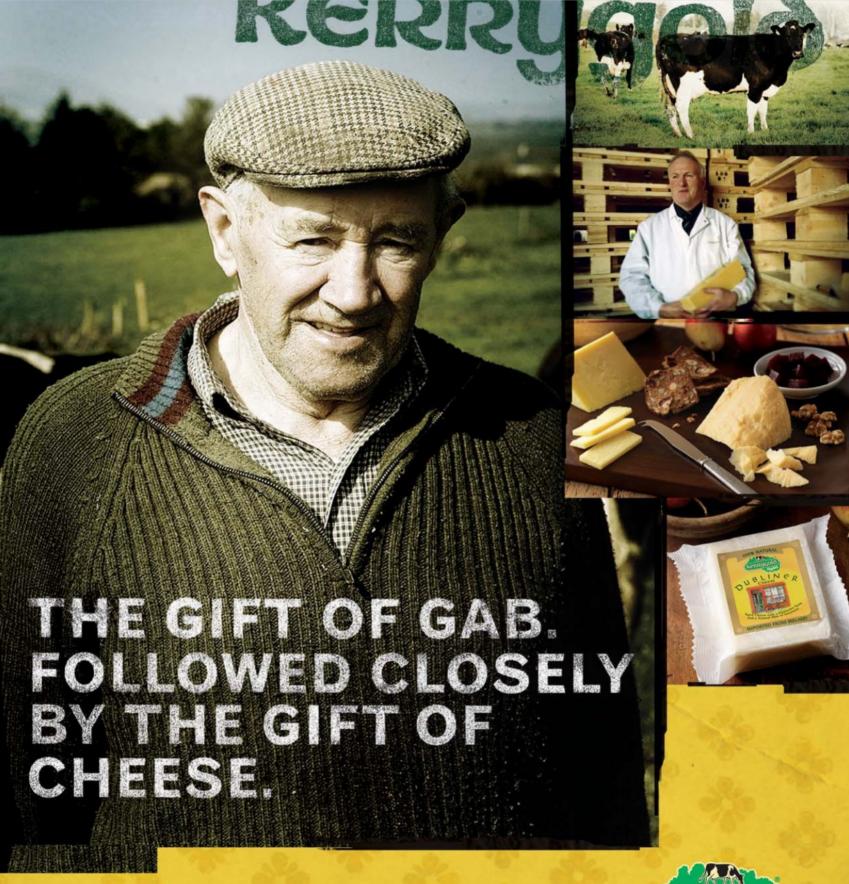
Salumeria Biellese now sells nearly 80 types of sausages and meats, but its dry-cured varieties are the standouts. Unlike most commercial sausages, these are not pasteurized but, rather, are dry-cured the old, slow way. The meat is mixed with salt and spices, stuffed into natural casings, and hung in an aging room where beneficial bacteria have developed over the years and contribute to the nuanced taste of the meat. With time, the sausages dry and ripen and acquire layers of savory flavor. "It's not about volume or speed," Buzzio says of his ancient trade. "We're completely in the 19th century as far as the product is concerned, and we're proud of it." Salumeria Biellese's cured meats cost between \$5 and \$24 per pound. To order, call 212/736-7376 or visit www.salumeriabiellese.com.

A selection of the dry-cured meats from Salumeria Biellese: 1 finochietta, 2 pancetta, 3 coppa, 4 lombo, 3 napolitana, 4 wild boar cacciatorini, 7 traditional cacciatorini, and 3 cacciatorini al diavolo.



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## REPORTER

# Forgotten Fruits

Dedicated preservationists are bringing heirloom apples back to the table

#### BY GARY PAUL NABHAN

HE MORNING SUN IS JUST PEEKING over the ridges of the Great Smoky Mountains when my friend Jim Veteto and I spot a tall, old-looking apple tree arching over the side of the road. We swerve our rented PT Cruiser to the shoulder and get out. I'm hoping that these apples are Nickajacks, a rare variety that's native to the highlands of western North Carolina, so I climb onto the hood of the car and reach as high as I can, to no avail. Jim, who is quite a bit taller

than I am, climbs up next to me and, with a little bounce, snatches a low-hanging fruit. He holds it up for inspection. I can tell from its color and irregular shape that it's not the apple we were searching for.

"It kind of looks like a Mudhole," I say, referring to a type once known in these parts for making excellent apple butter. I take a bite. Nope, this one is creamier, with whiter flesh. It's probably just one of the countless unnamed apple varieties you find in the wild around here.

"That's the dilemma," Jim says, as we get back in the car. "There are so many heirloom varieties that have adapted to the microclimates up here, it's hard to identify them." Jim, a lanky, bearded 35-year-old, knows a lot about heirloom fruits and vegetables. He works with the Southern Seed Legacy in Athens, Georgia, an organization devoted to preserving the seeds of heirloom plants in order to restore some of the genetic diversity that industrial agriculture has eroded over the years.

On this trip, though, we're looking for forgotten fruits, not seeds. We're on a latesummer apple search-and-rescue mission in

the mountains of North Carolina for a program I started five years ago called Renewing America's Food Traditions (RAFT). With the help of Slow Food USA and six other national organizations, RAFT aims to restore foods and culinary customs that are at risk of disappearing. Apples are at the top of our list because hundreds of varieties have

become extinct in recent decades, their unique physical attributes and tastes basically erased. For a food that is as iconic and as essential to the American culinary canon as the apple, it's tragic that only 11 varieties—out of the estimated 14,000 that evolved from the seeds English settlers brought to North America from Europe—constitute 90 percent of all apple consumption in the United States.

The remaining 10 percent includes heirloom apples of all shapes and

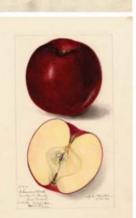
sizes—some gnarly and spotted and downright ugly, others with graceful silhouettes and glossy skin. Some are honey sweet; others have a lip-puckering, tannic tartness; still others fall somewhere in between, offering subtle hints of flavors most people may never have tasted in an apple. They have names like Gloria Mundi, Seek-No-Further, Ohio Nonpareil, Brushy Mountains Limbertwig, and Shiawassee Beauty, to name just a few. The problem is that fewer and fewer of these fruits are commercially available, as one small orchard after another is let go to seed and the names of the old varieties are forgotten. The trees themselves may survive, in the wild or on private property, but the histories of their fruit are often a mystery.

That's one reason why I'm driving the country roads of North Carolina with Jim: I'm meeting up with locals who can help me identify and revive some of these old varieties. This part of Appalachia—particularly the region known as the Southern Highlands, which encompasses the Blue Ridge, Great Smoky, and parts of the Cumberland and Allegheny mountain ranges—is one of

the richest apple habitats in the country. Today, somewhere between 800 and 1,000 distinct heirloom varieties still grow in the area's hills, coves, and hollers—more kinds, by some counts, than are found in all the other regions of North America combined.

Not surprisingly, the cooks of Appalachia have strong preferences

No.





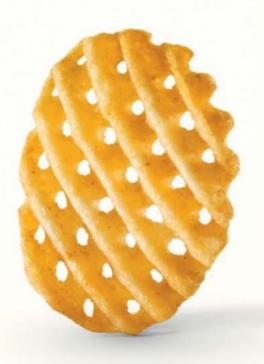
GARY PAUL NABHAN is the author of Renewing America's Food Traditions (Chelsea Green Publishing Company, 2008). This is his first article for SAVEUR.

Southern apple varieties painted by various artists for a USDA apple survey between 1888 and 1939. Clockwise from top left: Hames (1893); Harwell (1896); Arkansas Black (1906); Abernathy (1921).

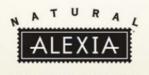
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## THE CHIPS THAT GIVE LUNCH

# AN INFERIORITY COMPLEX.



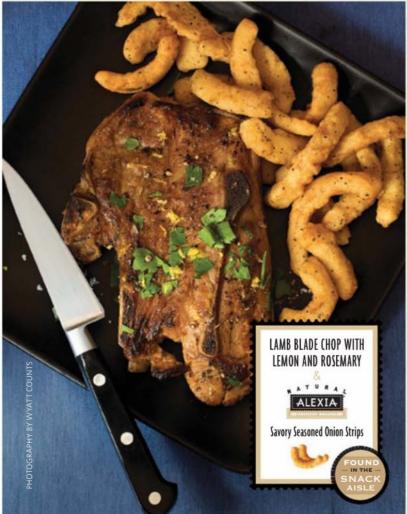
A GIANT LEAP FOR SNACK-KIND."

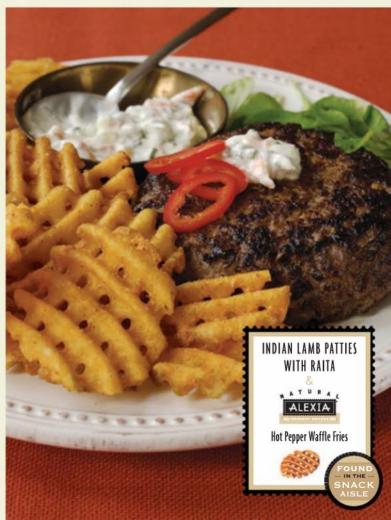












# TURKISH LAMB KEBABS

#### SERVES 2

- lb. lamb shoulder, cut into 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>" cubes
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- 1 tsp. ground coriander
- 1 tsp. dried thyme
- 1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 lemon, halved

#### METHOD

In a large bowl, combine lamb, cumin, thyme, coriander, cinnamon, and garlic; season with salt and pepper. Let marinate for 1 hour at room temperature or cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight. Thread lamb onto 4 skewers and set aside on a plate. Build a medium-hot fire in a charcoal grill or heat a gas grill to medium-high. Alternatively, heat a cast-iron grill pan over medium-high heat. Grill kebabs, turning occasionally, until browned and medium, about 6 minutes. Squeeze lemon on kebabs and serve with Alexia Bold & Spicy BBQ Waffle Fries.

## PAIRS WITH



BOLD & SPICY BBQ WAFFLE FRIES



PAIRS WITH

ATURA

ALEXIA

HOT PEPPER

WAFFLE FRIES

# LAMB WRAPS

#### SERVES 2

- 1/2 cup red wine vinegar
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- 1 tsp. sugar
- 1 small red onion, sliced crosswise into thin rings
- 2 pieces flatbread
- 3 tbsp. Greek yogurt
- 1/2 lb. thinly sliced cooked lamb
  - 1 tomato, thinly sliced
- 2 tbsp. fresh mint leaves
- 2 tbsp. fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves

# PAIRS WITH

CLASSIC RANCH WAFFLE FRIES



#### METHOD

In a small saucepan, bring 1/4 cup water, vinegar, salt, and sugar to a boil. Remove saucepan from heat, add onions, and let sit for 30 minutes to soften. Spread flatbread with yogurt, and arrange lamb, tomato, mint, parsley, and pickled red onions on top. Wrap flatbread around the filling into a cylinder. Cut sandwiches in half crosswise. Serve lamb wraps with Alexia Classic Ranch Waffle Fries.

# INDIAN LAMB PATTIES

#### SERVES 2

- 2 tbsp. peeled, grated carrot
- 2 tbsp. peeled, grated cucumber
- 1 tsp. kosher salt, plus more to taste
- 1 cup Greek yogurt, drained
- 3 tbsp. finely chopped cilantro
- 3 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 small yellow onion, finely chopped
- 1 1"-piece ginger, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 lb. ground lamb
- 2 tsp. garam masala Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 Fresno or Holland chile, thinly sliced

# crosswise METHOD

In a small sieve, combine carrot, cucumber, and 1 tsp. salt; let sit for 30 minutes. Rinse carrot mixture and squeeze out excess water. Combine carrot mixture with yogurt and 1 tbsp. cilantro in a small bowl; set raita aside. Meanwhile, heat 1 tbsp. oil in a 10" skillet over medium heat. Add garlic, onions, and ginger and cook, stirring occasionally, until soft, about 10 minutes; remove from heat and let cool. In a large bowl, combine the remaining cilantro, garlic mixture, lamb, garam masala, and season with salt and pepper. Divide lamb into four portions and form into patties. Heat remaining oil in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat. Add lamb patties and cook, flipping once, until browned and cooked through, about 8 minutes. Serve lamb with raita, sliced chiles, and Alexia Hot Pepper Waffle Fries.

# LAMB BLADE CHOP WITH LEMON AND ROSEMARY

#### SERVES 2

- 4 lamb blade chops
- 1/2 tsp. crushed red chile flakes
- 8 cloves garlic, smashed
- 1 tbsp. roughly chopped rosemary Peel of 1 lemon, roughly chopped
- 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 2 tbsp. roughly chopped flat-leaf parsley
- 1 tbsp. lemon zest

# PAIRS WITH

SAVORY SEASONED ONION STRIPS



#### METHOD

Put lamb in a 1-gallon resealable plastic bag and add chile flakes, garlic, rosemary, lemon peel, and oil. Seal and toss to coat lamb. Let marinate at room temperature for 1 hour or refrigerate overnight. Transfer lamb to a plate and scrape off marinade. Season lamb with salt and pepper. Heat a cast-iron skillet over mediumhigh heat until just smoking. Add lamb and cook, turning once, until browned and cooked to desired temperature, about 6 minutes for medium rare. Transfer lamb to 2 plates and sprinkle with parsley and lemon zest. Serve with Alexia Savory Seasoned Onion Strips.

To people like me, the disappearance of old apple varieties—like the die-off of an animal species—represents a profound loss, in terms not just of botanical diversity or rural cultural history but also of the

way we eat. The striking, unusual flavors and cooking properties possessed by these heirloom apples simply don't exist in supermarket varieties. And yet, Jim reminds me, most people in the region don't refer to the apples growing in their midst as heritage breeds. "Most people around here have never heard the term *heirloom* applied to plants," Jim says. "They just call them old-timey apples."

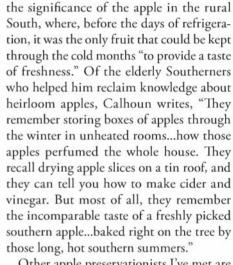
In the broadest sense, an heirloom apple is any distinct, named variety of the fruit that has been passed down in a family, community, or culture for generations. To preserve an heirloom variety, it's not enough simply to save the seeds, though. Growing a genetically identical apple requires a concerted, calculated effort: you have to graft cuttings from one tree onto the rootstock of another. The reason for this is that seedling apple trees—those that grow in the wild from seed-produce fruit that's essentially a hybrid of their parents and therefore a new kind of apple. This explains why countless varieties of the fruit, believed to have originated in Kazakhstan thousands of years ago, have propagated around the world.

My trip in north carolina with Jim is just the latest in a series of travels I've made with RAFT collaborators over the past few years to seek out, recruit, and learn from other Southern heirloom apple preservationists. These journeys have led me to forge friendships with some remarkable people—orchard keepers, historians, cider makers, horticulturists, and others. Perhaps the most respected scholar among them is the North Carolina apple historian Creighton Lee Calhoun Jr., who spends the majority of his waking hours matching forgotten fruits to their names. Since he took up this pursuit, in 1982, he has discovered and identified a slew of apples formerly thought to be extinct, relying mostly on horticulture books, old nursery catalogues, and archival

illustrations (like the ones shown on these pages, which were commissioned by the U.S. Department of Agriculture between the years 1888 and 1939). Calhoun, a soft-spoken 75-year-old, has also brought 300 heirloom varieties into cultivation at nurseries he consults with across the South.

In 1995 Calhoun published *Old Southern Apples* (McDonald & Woodward Publishing Company), a lavishly illustrated tome that has become a bible for apple preservationists. Not only does the volume present detailed descriptions of some 1,600 varieties, but it also brings to life the people and histories wrapped up with this food. He describes

# SOUTHERN COOKS HAVE STRONG PREFERENCES IN APPLES—ONE KIND FOR EATING FRESH, ANOTHER FOR SAUCE, ANOTHER FOR PIE

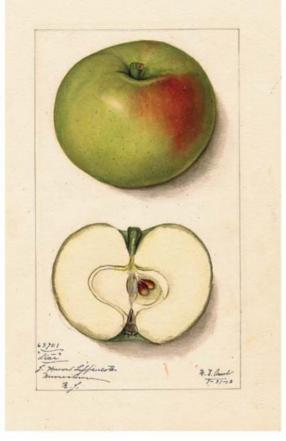


Other apple preservationists I've met are more recent converts to the cause. One of them, Tom Brown, is a retired chemical engineer in his late 60s who lives in Clemmons, North Carolina. In 1998 he became obsessed with a juicy variety believed to be extinct called Harper's Seedling and has since tracked down at least seven locales near his home where those apples once grew; he took cuttings from a surviving tree in the area just before it died and grafted them onto trees on his property in hopes

that, in a few years, he will have a steady supply of the delicious fruits. His hunt for Harper's Seedling has fueled a passion for finding other forgotten varieties. These days, Brown estimates, he racks up at least 20,000 miles a year on Southern back roads, traveling as far as Kentucky, Virginia, and Tennessee to chase down leads given to him by old-timers at regional festivals, people who grew up with these apples and can remember their names and characteristics.

"Time is running out," Brown told me when I ran into him at the Forgotten Fruits Summit, the first annual powwow for apple preservationists, held in Madison, Wisconsin, last March. "I recently picked up a picture I had taken of the six folks who had helped me the most in my search for apples, and I realized that five of them had died."

At that same summit, I met up with another dedicated preservation-



An illustration, circa 1913, of an heirloom Star apple.

#### REPORTER

ist: an orchard owner from Boone, North Carolina, named Bill Moretz. His orchard was started by his grandfather in the 1930s and is now home to one of the country's first community supported agriculture projects devoted to promoting apple diversity. Once a week, his customers receive a bag of several different kinds of heirloom apples.

Artisanal ciders made with heirloom apples at SAVEUR .COM/ISSUE123 One of their favorites is the Sweet Dixon, a dessert apple that has redstriped skin and crisp, sugary-sweet flesh. The story behind the Sweet

Dixon, which was widely thought to have disappeared, goes like this: Seventeen years ago Calhoun got wind that an elderly North Carolina woman had a huge old Sweet Dixon tree on her property that still produced fruit. By the time he arrived at her home to take cuttings, however, the tree had been cut down. Sensing Calhoun's disappointment, the woman managed to find another tree growing nearby, one she remembered from her childhood; he took cuttings and has been growing Sweet Dixons ever since. What Calhoun didn't know until years later—when he was asked by Moretz to identify an old tree growing near his barn—was that the same kind of apple had been growing on Moretz's property all along.

TOWARD THE END OF OUR North Carolina trip, Jim Veteto and I decide to visit Moretz at his orchard. When we arrive, he hands us a couple of Sweet Dixons straight from the tree to sample. Then he picks one for himself and takes a bite. "It's still green yet," Moretz

says, "but you can taste all the sugars and the flavors developing." It is clearly one of his favorites, but Moretz, like many other orchard keepers dedicated to bringing back as many old varieties as they can, is reluctant to proclaim the flavor of any single apple to be better than that of others.

Moretz's orchard, which is home to 100 different varieties of apple, is a supremely serene place, a grid of tidily pruned trees in evenly spaced rows that extend over rolling hills. The air is fragrant with fruit, and

#### THE EXTINCTION OF APPLE VARIETIES REPRESENTS A PROFOUND LOSS IN BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY, CULTURAL HISTORY, AND CULINARY IDENTITY

the grass underfoot is lush. Resisting the temptation to lie down right where I stand and soak up the scene, I follow Moretz as he makes his rounds, stopping before every other tree to examine its apples and the health of its bark, branches, and leaves.

Watching Moretz tend to his orchard of rare fruits, I come to the realization that it's more than nostalgia that drives people like him to keep such historic apple varieties alive. It's the sheer love of the food itself, in all its incarnations, and the joy of sharing them with friends and passing them on to a new generation. "I grow them to embrace the future," he says to Jim and me before we leave. "But it's not enough just to grow them. You have to eat them, too." (See The Pantry, page 99, for information about the RAFT project.)

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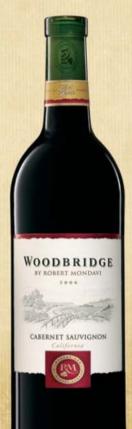
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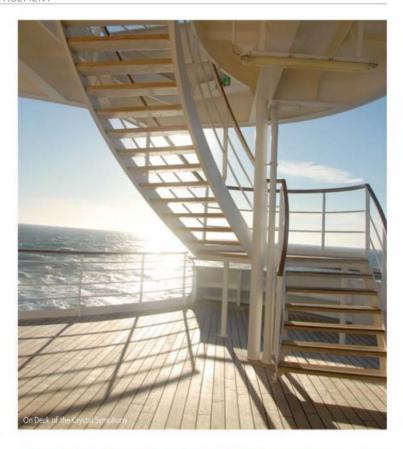
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## DRINK

# **Brilliant Brews**

In northern Italy, a craft beer revolution is under way

#### BY MARIALISA CALTA

T WAS TWO IN THE morning in Birra Troll, a fire-lit brewpub in the alpine town of Vernante, Italy, and the owner, Alberto Canavese, sat with his chin in his hand. "The Romans drank wine. The pope drinks wine. Italy is about wine, wine, wine, wine, wine," he said. This was an issue. Canavese makes beer.

And yet, judging by what I'd found so far while traveling around northern Italy with my college-age daughter Hannah, Canavese had little reason to worry. Delicious, unusual microbrews, paired with equally innovative food, seemed to be everywhere. That night, for example, we'd had several rounds of Birra



Troll's signature Shangrila, an amber ale flavored with ginger, coriander, cardamom, anise, saffron, curry, black pepper, and paprika, served alongside wild boar sausage grilled on the restaurant's wood-fired brazier.

It was Hannah who first tipped me off that microbrews are a growing presence in Italy. While living in Piedmont, the cradle of both

MARIALISA CALTA is the author of Barbarians at the Plate (Perigee, 2005).

Italian red wine production and the Slow Food movement, she had attended a beer-and-food pairing hosted by Birreria Baladin, a pioneering Italian microbrewery and restaurant near Turin. Afterward, she'd regaled me with an account of beers redolent of myrrh, black tea, and ginger, served with such things as foie gras and truffles.

This is how a new generation of Italians is enjoying its beer. The individual brews may be made in a nominally Belgian, German, or British style, but the impulse to experiment and to complement the bold-tasting beers with congenial foods is emphatically Italian. Witnessing this craft brewing revolution first-hand made me rethink not only Italian beer but the way Italians eat and drink.

THE ITALIAN CRAFT beer movement began in earnest in the mid-1990s. It started in the north, which, coincidentally, is also home to the industrial brewers Peroni and Moretti. Why there? I speculated that the north's proximity to beer-loving Germany might have something to do with it, but Lorenzo Dabove, the former cultural director of Union Birrai. one of the principal Italian craft beer associations, said the explanation wasn't so simple. I had arranged to meet with Dabove at the beginning of our trip, to get some background on the movement. Perhaps, he surmised, it was the challenge of making beer that could meet the standard of the storied wines of the region. Whatever the impetus, the renewed interest in brewing has sparked passion for craft brews all over Italy.

Dabove mapped out an ambitious beer quest for Hannah and me, pointing out that most of the small, independent breweries worth visiting were off the beaten track. Our tour began in Lurago Marinone, a small town about ten miles from Lake Como that contained narrow winding streets and villas hidden by oleander bushes. There, a brewer named Agostino Arioli opened a brewery-restaurant called Birrificio Italiano with his brother, Stefano, in 1997.

On a weekday at noon, Birrificio Italiano was packed with patrons lunching on dishes like scialatielli (thick, ribbonlike pasta) topped with a piquant, puttanesca-like sauce flavored with Bibock, the brewery's bock-style beer. The menu also offered local salumi and thick slices of melted dobbiaco, a mild cows' milk cheese from Alto Adige, served with crostini. "We were not going to have the traditional 'menu da pub,' with fried chips and the like," Arioli told us when we found him behind the bar. "We decided to investigate traditional, regional Italian foods as a match for our beer." After only 12 years as a brewmaster, Arioli has become something of an éminence grise in the Italian craft brewing community and frequently advises up-and-coming brewers. Our favorite beer of his was Scires, a Flemish-style sour ale that demonstrates not only how closely Arioli has studied the traditional brewing methods of northern Europe but also how confident he is in tweaking them. He ferments Scires with wild yeasts that contribute invigorating tart and acidic qualities and blends young beer with some that's been aged to take a bit of the edge off. The inspired addition of dark, tangy Vignola cherries, which are fermented right along with the young and old beers, underscores the final product's convergence of sweet and sour flavors.

It was cold and damp the next night, when we visited the refurbished brick schoolhouse that is home to a brewpub called Citabiunda, in Neive, a town about 90 miles from Lurago Marinone. Neive's lone cabdriver was not answering his cell phone, so eventually we threw ourselves on the mercy of a tobacco shop owner, who agreed to drive us up a steep, vineyard-lined lane to the brewery. There, couples, families, and groups of friends dined from a casual bistro menu: platters of bresaola served with stracchino, a



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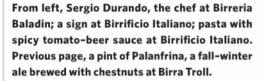
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#### DRINK





creamy cows' milk cheese; local tuma (tomme), a sheep's milk cheese, topped with honey, nuts, and ground cinnamon; pasta tossed with seasonal greens and cured meats.

Like all the craft beers we tasted, Citabiunda's brews are not pasteurized; they are also unfiltered and thus have a rich, bready quality. After dinner, we sought out two of the coowners, Stefano Carbone and Marco Marengo. When I asked what prompted them to get into this business, Marengo told me he'd always admired the beers of Ireland and had even studied beer making there. And yet, Marengo added, their mission is also a sort of patriotic one. "We know there are plenty of Italians who think of beer as something to drink on a hot day, maybe with a pizza," he said. "But we think of our beers as complementing the best of our country's food. We are working to educate Italians about food and beer."

MARKING THE CULMINATION of our tour was an evening meal at the restaurant of a boutique hotel called Casa Baladin, in the tiny hilltop town of Piozzo. The hotel was the latest venture of Teo Musso, who'd been described to me and Hannah as the rock star of Italian microbrewing. (He's since opened pubs in Cinzano and Rome and plans to open another in New York City, in 2011.) Back in 1986, we learned, he'd opened Birreria Baladin, a colorful pub featuring mostly Belgian beers that still draws lively crowds on weekends. A decade later, he traveled to Belgium to study with brewmas-



ters there and then returned to his hometown to brew his own beer. Since then, Musso has continued to expand his operations and his notions about the role of beer in Italian gastronomy. This was the brewer who hosted the beer-andfood tasting that had so intrigued Hannah a few months back.

Musso is a man of eccentric methods. He is known for playing music to the fermenting beer—the sounds of tango for one, New Wave for another-so that the yeast can respond accordingly, and he ferments one of his brews in wooden barrels in his mother's garden, defying the brewers' axiom that exposure to air is the death of beer. His Nora, an ale created as a tribute to the brewers of ancient Egypt, uses unmalted kamut, a grain cultivated for thousands of years in the Nile River valley. The Egyptians didn't brew with hops, so Musso uses as little as possible, instead drawing a balancing bitterness from myrrh and ginger added prior to fermentation.

The night we visited Casa Baladin, the menu featured sautéed scallops with cubes of crisp potato (a whimsical take on fish-and-chips); ravioli stuffed with chickpeas and tripe; a grilled filet of beef served with french fries; poached quail eggs with sweetbreads, truffles, and spinach; and a platter of chocolate desserts that featured a hazelnut-studded gelato.

During the course of our dinner, we sampled half of Musso's dozen excellent beers. Super Baladin, a Belgian abbey-style brew inspired by a ninth-century recipe, was light and flowery, with a slightly bitter finish. The zesty, saisonstyle Wayan was well-balanced and champagne fizzy. Nora, Musso's ancient-Egyptian-style ale, was remarkably thirst quenching. The pours were small, the pairings thoughtful. The fruity Super Baladin, for example, brought out the



#### SCIALATIELLI PICCANTI ALLA BIBOCK

(Pasta with Spicy Tomato-Beer Sauce)

SERVES 4

In this dish (above), based on one served at Birrificio Italiano, a brewery and restaurant in Italy's Lombardy region, the puttanesca-style pasta sauce is enriched with Bibock, the brewery's bock-style beer.

- 3 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- cup salt-packed capers, rinsed
- oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes, chopped
- cloves garlic, smashed
- oil-packed anchovy filets, chopped
- red Fresno chiles, seeded and chopped
- gherkins, chopped
- red onions, chopped
- 28-oz. can whole peeled tomatoes, undrained
- oz. bock beer, preferably Birrificio Italiano Bibock (see page 99)
- 3/4 cup Kalamata olives, pitted and halved Kosher salt and black pepper, to taste
- 1 lb. pasta, such as scialatielli or linguine
- caper berries, for garnish
- 2 tbsp. finely chopped flat-leaf parsley
- 1 Heat oil in a 4-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat. Add capers, sun-dried tomatoes, garlic, anchovies, chiles, gherkins, and onions; cook, stirring occasionally, until ingredients are browned, about 20 minutes. Add canned tomatoes and beer: boil. Reduce heat to medium-low; simmer, stirring occasionally, until sauce thickens, about 11/2 hours. Purée sauce in a blender; return sauce to pan over low heat. Stir in olives and season with salt and pepper.
- 2 Bring a 6-qt. pot of salted water to a boil. Add pasta; cook until al dente. Drain pasta and transfer pasta to sauce; toss to combine. Stir in a little pasta water to loosen the sauce, if you like. Serve pasta garnished with caper berries and parsley.

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#### DRINK

earthy sweetness of the ravioli; the Noël, an ale with hints of licorice and pepper, held its own next to the bittersweet chocolate desserts.

As we were finishing the meal, Musso stopped by our table with glasses of Xyauyù, a rich, mahogany-colored beer styled after English barley wine. He told us that he brews Xyauyù using a variation on the solera method, a sherry-making technique that entails tapping and refilling barrels in rotation so that each barrel always contains some of the original wine or brew. The drink is sold in elegant bottles, boxed like a fine cognac. "This is a sofa beer," Musso advised—one to sip as a nightcap. Potent and complex, Xyauyù calls to mind a fine port. It is, like many of the beers we tasted on our trip, an extravagant drink, one even a pope might appreciate.

#### **Tasting Notes**

Italy's bold new craft brews tend to feature unexpected combinations of flavorings—honey, say, with coriander—that make for palate-awakening interplays of sweetness and bitterness, fruit and spice. Our friend Levi Dalton, sommelier at the Manhattan restaurant Convivio, pairs them in much the same way he does the big barolo wines of Italy's Piedmont: with roasted meats and piquant pasta dishes like the scialatielli on page 38. Below, eight of our favorites. (See THE PANTRY, page 99, for sources.) —Karen Shimizu

Birreria Baladin: Noël (\$18.99/750 ml) Robust and chocolatey, with a complex, peppery bite.

Birreria Baladin: Nora (\$18.99/750 ml) A full-bodied beer made with Egyptian kamut grain, ginger, and myrrh.

**Birreria Baladin: Super Baladin** (\$16.99/750 ml) Light and well-balanced, with faint peach aromas and a tangy finish.

Birreria Baladin: Wayan (\$17.99/750 ml) Nimble and lovely; redolent of dried apricots. Crisp up front, with a fruity finish.

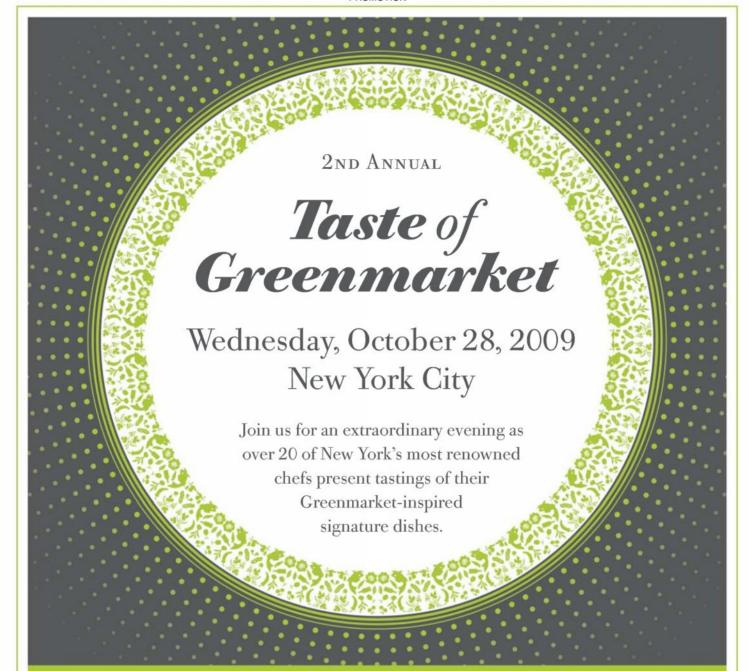
**Birreria Baladin: Xyauyù (\$49.99/500 ml)** Similar in character to a port, this intense brew tastes of burnt sugar and tamari.

Birrificio Italiano: Cassissona (\$16.20/750 ml)

Black currant liqueur added during fermentation yields a tart, bright-tasting beer.

**Birrificio Troll: Daù (\$20.99/750 ml)** A brisk beer with pepper and anise. Refreshing notes of pineapple and evergreen.

Birrificio Troll: Geisha (\$20.00/375 ml) Matured for 12 months, this smooth, sweet barley wine-style beer has hints of fig and strawberry jam.



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#### MEMORIES

### **Haunted House**

Remembering the time Mom got serious about Halloween

#### BY ANDREA TODD



THE YEAR SHE AND my dad got sober, my mom went all Martha Stewart for Halloween. She was up at her usual hour—her former cocktail hour, five in the morning—and spent the whole day mixing and stirring, beating bowlfuls of butter and eggs, sugar and cocoa. She slapped not stingy spoonfuls but copious scoops of peanut butter chip cookie dough onto shiny baking sheets and set five dozen of the cake-size cookies on wire racks to let them cool.

She rolled a dozen Red Delicious apples in a homemade caramel sauce of butter and brown sugar—Kraft, schmaft. She coated a dozen more with melted chocolate and chopped cashews. Pans clattered and mixers whirred and the oven door squeaked open and slammed shut all day long, the oven timer atwitter like a randy spring robin. She poured a cow's worth of milk into her big iron stew pot to make real hot cocoa: not the instant stuff or the drink brewed from a premixed cocoa—sugar blend but the kind made with pure cocoa powder sifted—sifted!—with cinnamon, sugar, vanilla, and black pepper.

My mother had bought four pumpkins,

big ones that cost about 40 bucks apiece, and carved them in masterly fashion: a mean one with fierce-looking eyes; a sad one with a big frown; a sinister one with fangs; and a maniacal one with a wild grin. She scooped out the fleshy insides and put them aside for pumpkin ravioli and even carved little recesses in the shell bottoms for candles. My dad, a fire-fighter, argued in vain for flashlights.

"This is going to be a real Halloween," Mom insisted.

My dad helped her fit our collie, Meggie, with a pointed black hat and, out on the front porch, assembled a plastic skeleton that had a motion detector inside. When trick-or-treaters walked past it, the skull's eyes glowed and it cackled and shouted, "I'm gonna get you!" My younger sister Elizabeth, rail thin, dressed in goth black, glared at it as she tramped out the door to some high-school party. "The neighbors are gonna hear that," she said. "They'll call the cops."

I assumed she was referring to the previous year, when the Todds put on quite a show for the kids in our Sacramento neighborhood. Dad had gone out for something we didn't need—milk or sugar—and come home hours later, drunk and raging. Elizabeth ran out to the backyard to hide behind the picnic table. I scrambled out my bedroom window. My mom tried to hold Dad off in the kitchen. The finale was spectacular, with two policemen escorting my father, handcuffed, from the house, as trick-or-treaters watched from jack-o'-lanterned porches, the flashing lights of police cruisers reflecting off their masked faces.

A year later, as dusk fell, my mom and I peeked out the window, watching as parents shepherded their children anxiously past our house. Mom lit a cigarette and looked back at the kitchen, at the cookies and apples, at the pot of cocoa on the stove. "What are we going to do with all this crap?" she said.

Eventually she announced that she was going to bed. "You wanna stay up in case anyone comes to the door?" she asked.

"Sure," I said. I sat down at the kitchen table to work on a college paper about Joan Didion. I jumped when the doorbell rang. I glanced at the clock: it was 10:25. I looked out the front window and saw three teenage trick-or-treaters with bike chains wrapped around their legs and black eyes and pointy goatees drawn on their faces in charcoal. They were checking out the cackling skeleton.

"Trick or treat," one boy said flatly when I opened the door.

"Doesn't anyone answer their doorbells around here?" muttered another. I pointed out that most trick-or-treaters were in bed.

There was a long pause; then I said, "Hang on." I went into the kitchen and returned with a huge plate piled with the giant peanut butter chip cookies. "Take them all," I told them, handing over the treats in towering stacks. I brown-bagged the caramel apples and handed those over as well. The teenagers, their treat bags stretched to bursting, gaped at me.

"You want some cocoa?" I asked. Before they could answer, I went back to the kitchen and ladled out three Dixie cups emblazoned with black cats.

"Is it spiked?" one of the teenagers asked.

"Not this year," I said, smiling, before shutting the door. The kitchen was dark except for the light above the stove. I lifted the pot of cocoa and slowly poured the contents down the drain, so that my mother wouldn't hear the sound, and I left the cookie plate in the sink so that she could see it was empty—proof that the neighborhood children had come.

Andrea Todd is a writer living in Northern California. This is her first article for saveur.

## The SAVEUR Chef Series

AARÓN SÁNCHEZ was cooking Mexican food before he could read. As a young boy in the border town of El Paso, Texas, he would help his mother—the legendary culinary authority Zarela Martinez—in the kitchen, and the experience never left him. This inspired a life devoted to Latin food, first at Paladar, his pioneering restaurant on New York's Lower East Side, and later at Centrico, his modern homage to



Mexican flavors. Fresh off a season of the Food Network's *Chefs vs. City*, Sánchez now plans to open a taco truck. His mother might have been his greatest influence, but Sánchez is surely paving his own way.

#### What's the first thing you eat when you get to Mexico?

My fiancée's family has a house outside of Mexico City, and when we go into the city, I have breakfast at La Cardinal, right outside the Zócalo. It's this baroque place where you get old-school breakfasts like *chilaquiles* (tortillas soaked in sauce and topped with egg) and enchiladas with chicken and red chiles. If I'm in the Yucatán, I go to a traditional Mayan *taquería* for *tacos de guisado*, corn tortillas topped with things like stewed meats, liver and onions, or eggs and wild spinach.

#### When the weather in Mexico gets cold, what do you eat?

With the cold weather comes substantial foods like rich moles, green *posole* packed with pork shoulder or pigs' feet, and *carne con chile colorado* (pork braised with tasty, mild chiles and garlic), which I grew up eating in the North. Since Mexico is a big country composed of 32 very different states, people may be eating winter fruits like quince and pomegranate in one area and mangoes dusted with chili powder in another.

#### What ingredients are you excited about right now?

I'm excited about so many Mexican ingredients, such as the vanilla from Papantla, in Veracruz, which I think is the best in the world, and the *sapote negro*, a fruit whose flesh is jammy sweet. I'm also interested in wild greens, which we call *quelites*. I had a farmer growing a variety of these greens and herbs for me—things like *hoja santa* and *chipil*.

#### How do they eat quelites?

For example, *papalo*, an herb I'm especially crazy about, is often served as a garnish for tacos made with really fatty meats. In Toluca, they serve tacos filled with a green chorizo (made with basil, spinach, and pistachios), topped with cactus, and served alongside sprigs of *papalo*—a delicious palate cleanser. There's almost nothing to equate the flavor to: it's almost like mint, eucalyptus, and pine needles rolled into one leaf.

#### CARNE CON CHILE COLORADO

SERVES 4-6

- 3 white onions, quartered
- 8 tomatillos, peeled and washed
- 4 tomatoes, quartered
- 8 cloves garlic, peeled
- 1/2 lb. dried ancho chiles, stemmed, seeded, and de-veined
- 1/2 lb. dried guajillo chiles, stemmed, seeded, and de-veined
- 1 qt. chicken stock
- 1 tbsp. ground cumin
- 1 tbsp. ground coriander
- 1 tbsp. ground mustard seed
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil Salt and pepper
- 1 (11/2 to 2 lb.) flank steak or brisket
- 2 cups water
- 12 tortillas Shredded Monterey Jack

Preheat the oven to 500°.

On a sheet tray or baking pan, place onions, tomatillos, tomatoes, and garlic and drizzle with olive oil. Place under the broiler or roast in oven until the vegetables start to get a little charred on the outside. Remove and set aside. On another sheet tray or baking pan, place the dried chiles, and toast in a 500° oven for 1 minute or until the chiles start to release some smoke. Remove and plunge into bowl with hot water and set aside.

In a blender, begin puréeing the chiles and roasted vegetables in batches with chicken stock until smooth. Season with salt and pepper and set aside.

In a sauté pan, toast the cumin, coriander, and mustard seed for 3 minutes or until they start to smoke. Remove from pan and place in a small mixing bowl. Add the olive oil, salt, and pepper, to make a paste. Rub this paste all over the piece of flank steak and allow to marinate for 30 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 350°. Preheat a grill or grill pan on high.

Grill the flank steak for 3 minutes on each side. Place the flank steak in a roasting pan and pour the puréed chile sauce over it. Add 2 cups of water, cover with foil, and cook in the oven for 1 hour until the meat becomes flaky.

Remove the meat from the pan, shred the meat, and reserve the sauce. Place 6 of the tortillas onto a baking sheet. Put a small amount of the shredded meat on the tortilla and spoon over some of the sauce. Top with some cheese. Repeat with the remaining ingredients. Bake for 5 minutes and serve.

#### CLASSIC

### **Special Sauce**

Chicken tikka masala's serendipitous evolution

#### BY LIZZIE COLLINGHAM

SOMETIME IN THE 1970s, a customer in an Indian restaurant in Glasgow, Scotland, supposedly complained that the clay oven—baked chicken tikka he'd ordered was served without sauce, prompting the chef to improvise one from a can of tomato soup, a few spices, and a splash of cream. Thus was born the winning combination of fragrant, succulent chicken and creamy tomato gravy known as chicken tikka masala. At least, that's the story being advanced by a Scottish parliament minister who has applied on behalf of the city of Glasgow for Protected Designation of Origin status, which would mean that any reference to the dish would have to indicate its (as yet unproven) Glaswegian provenance.

Regardless of where it was invented, chicken tikka masala has, over the years, become a staple on Indian restaurant menus in the United Kingdom and a best-selling ready-made curry in the country's supermarkets, not to mention a popular pizza topping and sandwich filling. Some food critics have condemned it as inauthentic, insisting that the dish was unknown in India until restaurants there began serving it in imitation of restaurants in Britain. I would argue that chicken tikka masala actually belongs to a long and illustrious line of South Asian dishes that have been reinterpreted throughout the colonial and post-colonial worlds, giving rise to a distinct, Anglo-Indian style of cookery.

The dish's main component, chicken tikka, or boneless chicken pieces marinated in a mixture of yogurt and spices and then cooked in a clay tandoor oven, is itself a classic Punjabi dish. The tandoor imparts a smoky flavor to the chicken, which acquires a vivid orange or scarlet hue from turmeric, cayenne, or, often,

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food coloring in the marinade. Tandoor ovens gained a higher profile internationally after the restaurateur Kundan Lal Gujral built one in 1947 at Moti Mahal, his legendary restaurant in Delhi, a favorite of Indian statesmen and visiting dignitaries. The restaurant's signature dish was murgh makhani (butter chicken): tandoor-baked chicken in a sauce made with leftover marinade, butter, and tomatoes. It is



possible that the cook who "invented" chicken tikka masala was attempting to replicate Moti Mahal's famous sauce. That he used canned soup to do it was very much in keeping with the convenience-minded British cooking of the postwar period.

Today, many chefs in the UK and elsewhere opt for fresh tomatoes instead of canned; some also enrich the sauce with ground almonds and substitute more-fragrant coconut milk for cream. Home cooks, too, have furthered the evolution by grilling or broiling the chicken to reproduce the tandoor-baked flavor. While the exact lineage of chicken tikka masala remains a subject of heated debate in some quarters, I regard it with affection as an example of the dynamic, mongrel nature of Indian food.

#### CHICKEN TIKKA MASALA

SERVES 6

The chicken in this dish (left) is kept separate from the sauce until the end to preserve its succulence.

- 1 tbsp. ground turmeric
- 4 tsp. garam masala
- 1 tsp. red food coloring (optional)
- 6 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 2 ½" piece ginger, peeled and chopped, plus julienned strips for garnish
- 1 jalapeño, stemmed and chopped
- 1 28-oz. can whole peeled tomatoes, undrained
- 2 lbs. boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1½" cubes
- 1/4 cup Greek yogurt, such as Fage Kosher salt, to taste
- 6 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1 tsp. coriander seeds
- 1/2 tsp. cumin seeds
- 1 tbsp. paprika
- 2 small yellow onions, finely chopped
- 1 cup heavy cream
  Cilantro leaves, for garnish
  Cooked basmati rice, for serving
- In a blender, purée turmeric, 2 tsp. garam masala, coloring, garlic, ginger, jalapeños, and ⅓ cup water. Put paste into a bowl. In the same blender, purée tomatoes and strain through a sieve. In a bowl, mix 2 tbsp. paste, chicken, yogurt, and salt; marinate for 30 minutes. Place oven rack 4″ from heating element; heat to broil. Transfer chicken to a foil-lined sheet tray; broil until cooked, 5–6 minutes; set aside.
- 2 Heat butter in 6-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat. Add coriander and cumin; toast 4-6 minutes. Add paprika and onions; cook until soft, 6-8 minutes. Add remaining paste; brown for 5-6 minutes. Add tomatoes; cook for 2 minutes. Stir in cream and 1 cup water; boil. Reduce heat; simmer until thickened, 6-8 minutes. Stir in remaining masala and chicken; season with salt. Serve with garnishes and rice.





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## Explore the Land of the **SEVEN MOLES**

Just hearing the name can make your mouth water: **OAXACA**, the Land of the Seven Moles. It has become *the* place to taste these world-renowned sauces. From the Nahuatl word *molli* (mixture), they range from soupy to thick, from brick red and vivid green to orangish-yellow and nearly black, and are made from countless permutations of chiles, herbs, spices, nuts, and seeds, some are relatively simple to prepare. The mole Amarillo, for example, is made with the local chilhuacle chile and pungent herbs like hoja santa and epazote. Its yellowish broth often contains tiny dumplings made from fresh masa and is incomparably delicious. Others, like mole negro, are complicated affairs that can take an entire day to prepare and involve dozens of ingredients, including tortillas, chiles, and chile seeds that are literally burnt and give the sauce its beautifully bitter edge.

As tasty as these delectable sauces are, a whole culinary universe exists in Oaxaca beyond moles. In the bustling markets, next to buckets overflowing with all manner of dried chiles and women selling grasshoppers (chapulines) by the bagful, vendors grill thick tortillas called tlayudas, which they top with refried beans, meats, a drizzle of lard, and queso Oaxaqueño cheese—a string cheese that's a sure sign of the Arabic influence brought by the Spanish. Chocolate, tinged with almond and cinnamon, is a specialty of Oaxaca and is often slurped as a cold drink. Speaking of drinks, the state is home to mezcal, the artisanal agave-based spirit made in small batches. If you think tequila's delicious, you need to try mezcal. Food even plays a part in Christmastime festivals—on December 23, Oaxacans gather in the main square for Night of the Radishes to view the exquisite figures artists carve from the humble vegetable.



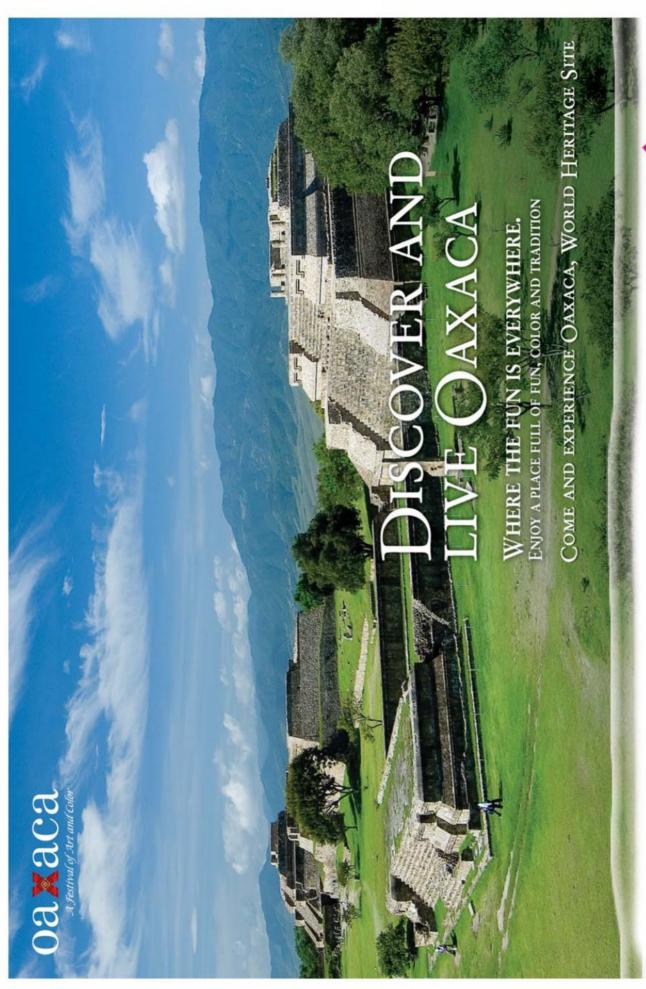
While the fabulous street food reflects Oaxaca's delicious past, local chefs look toward an equally tasty future, paying creative tribute to the region's traditions and ingredients. These culinary whizzes run modern restaurants that look to the rest of the world for inspiration but present food that's still entirely Mexican.

For more information and mole recipes, visit www.visitmexico.com and www.oaxaca.travel













There is no other meat like it: supple and velvety, delicate yet rich, lamb has a flavor that seems to spring from the mountain pastures, herb-covered grasslands, and other pastoral settings in which lambs are typically raised. Whether it is a pair of tender, rosy chops from a suckling lamb or a glorious, garlic-studded leg from a fullerflavored yearling, everything about this meat proclaims its purity; indeed, it is that pristine taste of nature, and of youth, that allows lamb to take to such a wide range of flavorful accompaniments and has made it a cherished food of so many cuisines. Restaurant chefs in America have long championed lamb, and yet home cooks in this country have traditionally prepared it less often than they have other meats in their own kitchens. That is starting to change, though, as tastes become worldlier and good-quality lamb is increasingly available at butcher shops and supermarkets in an inspiring variety of ages, breeds, and cuts. On the following pages, we unlock the secrets and illuminate the subtleties of this fascinating ingredient, sharing the experiences of cooks from around the globe and presenting recipes—from a classic spice-infused Greek moussaka to an aromatic Middle Eastern stew—that showcase lamb's incomparable beauty. —THE EDITORS









## Lamb Around the World

I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER THE SHOCK I had as I walked down my parents' street in Beirut and almost stepped in a pool of blood. The civil war had just ended, and I couldn't understand why I would be stumbling across such a gruesome sight. Then I remembered. It was early morning, and our local butcher must have been slaughtering a lamb in his shop, a practice common to this day in Lebanon. § I walked inside the store and watched him as he laid the head and trotters

on his block and carefully cleaned the innards in a bucket of water. He hung the precious liver on a hook and proceeded to cut the carcass in half along the spine before hanging it up, too. As customers entered the shop, asking for specific parts, he'd take the lamb down and cut it to order.

Such a scene is a fixture of daily life all over the Middle East and North Africa, where lamb is an essential, even revered, part of both everyday and celebratory cooking. It is rare to find anything but lamb at butcher shops in this part of the world; there isn't enough grazing land for cows, and goats are too destructive to keep in large, uncontrolled flocks. It was in the Middle East, historians believe, that sheep were first domesticated, some 11,000 years ago, not only for meat but also for milk and wool. To this day, on the slopes of Mount Lebanon, as in the Alps and elsewhere, shepherds follow ancient farming methods, herding their flocks down from the high grasslands onto the plains when cooler weather arrives.

I grew up eating fresh lamb every which way: cooked to tenderness in tomato-based *yakhneh*, or stews, that were flavored with cinnamon, all-spice, and citrus zest; ground and stuffed into eggplants; minced with onions, spices, and bulgur for kibbeh; and more. We ate or used every part of the animal. The liver was a delicacy, served raw for breakfast, cut into cubes with fresh mint, and the meaty bones went into a large pot with hulled grains of whole wheat to make *h'risseh*, a comforting porridge.

It was only when I left Beirut for London in 1973 and began to travel extensively in the West that I realized that the rest of the world approached lamb quite differently. In Great Britain, the meat—most often a big cut, like a whole leg—tends to be cooked simply: roasted, say, and served with vinegar-spiked mint sauce and red currant jelly. At first, I found the notion of eating lamb with sweet-tart accompaniments rather odd, but I quickly came to savor the way the silky jelly and the sharp-sweet sauce cut into the rich meat and made it taste lighter. I learned that the French prefer more-straightforward combinations, as in their lamb and vegetable navarin stew or a rib rack roasted with herbs like rosemary and thyme.

By contrast, in the United States, I learned that except at restaurants, where I found wonderfully creative lamb salads and stews, the meat was a

Beet stew with lamb meatballs, an Iraqi-Jewish specialty, facing page (see page 66 for a recipe).

bit of an outcast, not nearly so popular as beef or pork. When I was testing recipes for one of my cookbooks while living in a borrowed apartment in New York City, I would walk to the supermarket a few blocks away and stand before the meat case, wondering where I was going to find the necks and bellies and boned shoulder shanks that I needed. Eventually, I learned that specialty markets and butcher shops carried larger selections, and at farmers' markets in New York City and elsewhere, I bought fresh lamb, both meaty cuts and offal, of impeccable quality that was as delicious as any I grew up with in Beirut.

LAMB IS AN INHERENTLY EXPRESSIVE FOOD; more than the flesh of any other animal, its rosy meat speaks of the place in which the animal was raised. The Scots have their treasured lambs from the Shetland Islands, which graze on heather, and the French prize their *agneaux de présalé*: sheep that roam the sea salt—kissed meadows of coastal Normandy and Brittany. The flavor of the meat carries hints of the ocean and the wild herbs that grow along its shores.

The distinctive characteristics of lamb probably have as much to do with nurture as with nature, though. In *The River Cottage Meat Book* (Hodder & Stoughton, 2004), the cookbook author Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall explains that because sheep thrive easily on all kinds of terrain, they are more likely to be raised and fed outdoors, on natural pasture, instead of in feedlots. So it is in Great Britain, where Fearnley-Whittingstall lives, as well as in Australia and New Zealand, the two top lamb-exporting countries in the world. Even in the United States, where most lambs are fed corn to fatten them up before slaughter, they still have spent most of their lives eating grass.

The breed of the lamb also affects flavor. Those bred for wool as well as meat tend to taste gamier than those raised exclusively for meat, which are almost always larger. Still, while many lamb lovers have preferences for a specific kind of sheep—I, for one, am partial to fat-tailed sheep, a variety that's common across the Middle East—lamb breeds have not become designer labels, as Angus beef and Berkshire pork have. Not yet, that is.

More than anything else, age determines the taste of lamb; the younger the animal is, the sweeter, milder, and more tender its meat. That's one reason people go crazy for spring lamb—traditionally, an animal born in the winter and slaughtered in the spring—although, in reality, because dif-

ferent breeds are slaughtered at different times of year, the term doesn't denote seasonality anymore. In fact, the retail term *spring lamb* now-adays refers to the age of the animal (six to 12 months), regardless of the time of year it was slaughtered. Terminology aside, the delicate flavor of young lamb is coveted in many parts of the world; the Spanish, southern Italians, and Greeks have a particular predilection for tender, pale-colored milk-fed lamb that's less than three months old.

In much of the Arab world, cooks prefer stronger-tasting and, often, fattier lamb: usually animals that are older than what's known as hogget or yearling (12 months) and often approaching mutton (24 months). Such general preferences notwithstanding, the ways of preparing lamb in Arab countries can vary markedly. In Morocco, inexpensive cuts are ground for humble street fare, like cumin-spiked merguez sausage, while pricier cuts are left on the bone for slow-cooked tagines. But in Lebanon, Syria, and Turkey, the best cuts are usually ground or cut into small pieces. At one of my favorite restaurants, İmam Çağdas, a kebab shop in the southern Turkish city of Gaziantep, the cooks still mince the meat by hand, wielding enormous knives like sabers, rocking them back and forth to render the meat into a luscious pulp.

The grandest of all the minced lamb dishes is kibbeh (known as *köfte* in Turkey). I have vivid childhood memories of my mother and grand-mother sitting on either side of a large white marble mortar containing chunks of raw lamb. They took turns using a heavy wooden pestle to pound the meat into a paste with onion and tail fat before blending in bulgur wheat and seasoning the mixture with salt, pepper, cinnamon, and allspice. Then they'd shape the kibbeh into patties and serve it, raw. I would hover nearby, ready to grab the first taste. Such preparations are a staple of meze platters across the Middle East and offer a wonderful way to relish the herbaceous nuances of the meat.

More than just an ingredient, lamb has long been a potent symbol in the ancient mythologies of both Eastern and Western cultures and one of the most important sacrificial animals in the rituals of the Christian, Jewish, and Islamic faiths. It is the traditional centerpiece of the feasts of Passover, Easter, and Eid el-Adha, the Muslim holiday that commemorates God's sparing of Abraham's son, Ishmael. Around the world, cooks celebrate these occasions with whole, spit-roasted lamb, whether it's the Greek dish *arnáki paskalinó*, flavored with fresh herbs, or the Moroccan delicacy *mechoui*, which is cooked inside pit ovens dug into the ground. Many families I know in Morocco, Lebanon, and other places keep a lamb in their yard, fattening it on mulberry and grape leaves in preparation for a feast. I can still recall the image of my grandmother leaning over a fence to feed her big-eyed lambs by hand.

My grandmother's lamb, her marble mortar, and the butcher on my parents' street in Beirut are memories now, but my appreciation of this food is as strong as ever. A few years ago, while visiting the warrenlike souks of the ancient Syrian city of Aleppo, I came upon two old men, dressed in the long robes known as abayas, who were preparing a lamb to roast for a wedding party. It was a scene I can only describe as biblical. I stood for a while admiring their dexterity and purposefulness. As I walked away, I wished I could have been invited to the feast. —Anissa Helou, author of Mediterranean Street Food (HarperCollins, 2002)

An American butcher shop circa 1940, top right. Right, Tajik women in China eating laghman (noodles with mutton) at a wedding ceremony. Facing page, lamb chops with mint salsa verde (see page 67 for a recipe).











#### LAMB PART TWO

### A Guide to Lamb Cuts

The meaty leg of lamb and the elegant rib rack get all the love in the United States, but getting to know cuts from other parts of the animal can vastly expand your cooking repertoire to include dishes like hearty stews, juicy burgers, lavish roasts, and deeply flavorful tagines, curries, and kebabs. When buying lamb, look for fine-grained, rosy-red meat with firm, white fat. As a rule, lamb labeled USDA Prime or Choice and grass-fed lamb sold at farmers' markets have the best flavor and texture. Below are 12 versatile lamb cuts and suggestions for how to cook them; at right is a visual primer on where these cuts come from. —*Hunter Lewis* 

**Square-Cut Shoulder** This flavorful, ample cut consists of nicely marbled meat that has a pronounced sweetness. Because the shoulder muscles do more work than the leg muscles, they're less tender and thus take well to long, slow roasting or braising. Ask your butcher to remove the bones and prepare the meat according to your needs: rolled and tied for a roast, cut into chunks for a stew, or ground for burgers, moussaka (see page 68 for a recipe), or Middle Eastern spiced lamb dishes like kibbeh.

**Arm Shoulder Chop** This inexpensive cut from the lamb's shoulder section has rich marbling and can be cooked in a number of ways; try marinating (see "Rubs and Marinades," page 67) and pan-frying or broiling them to medium rare or braising them in red wine and herbs.

**Stew Meat** You can make rich stews—from French lamb navarin (see page 68 for a recipe) to Indian rogan josh—using pieces cut from almost any part of a lamb. We think stew meat from the shoulder is best, as it becomes incomparably tender during stewing and braising. You can save money by buying deboned portions of the shoulder and cutting it into one-and-a-half-inch cubes yourself.

**Fore Shank** The shank is the muscular bottom portion of the leg. It is the ultimate cut for slow braises that require rich, intense flavor, such as North African tagines. Long cooking causes the connective tissue to break down and yields succulent, fork-tender pieces. A rich lamb shank takes well to bright-tasting garnishes like gremolata (a mixture of lemon zest and chopped parsley) or sweet ones like the apricot chutney on page 69.

**Neck Slices** Typically sold as thick, bone-in slices, lamb neck is inexpensive and full of flavor. Like oxtail, neck meat also has plenty of collagen, a natural compound in red meat that lends a silky richness to stews, braises, ragùs, and other slow-cooked dishes.

**Breast** This inexpensive, rectangular-shaped cut consists of meat and rib bones; it's often trimmed and sold as spareribs. Boneless breast can be stuffed with bread crumbs, rolled, and braised or roasted. You can also buy ribs (often called riblets) separately; they're great grilled and basted with a tangy-sweet vinegar sauce.

**Rack of Lamb** A whole rack of lamb—comprising seven or eight ribs from the center of the animal—makes a supreme roast. A classic preparation calls for a crust of herbs and coarse salt and roasting over high heat. For a more striking presentation, ask your butcher to french the rack—that is, remove the layer of fat and thin strips of meat and muscle extending to the ends of rib bones—or do it yourself following the instructions on page 94.

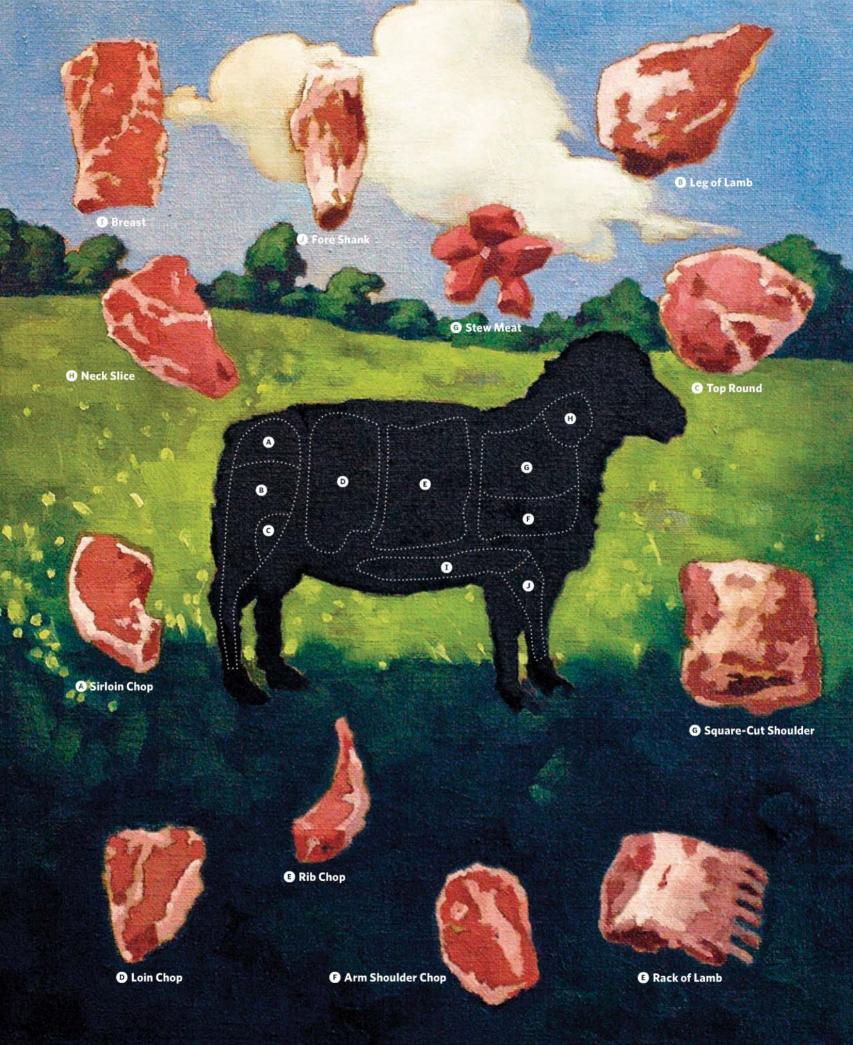
**Rib Chops** One of the most popular cuts is individual rib chops, which can range in size from dainty New Zealand chops to meaty Colorado ones. Each has a tender eye of lean, pink meat and a thick layer of flavorful fat.

Loin Chops These diminutive T-bone steaks contain a portion of the loin and tenderloin and are the leanest, tenderest, and priciest cuts. Cooked quickly on the grill or under the broiler, they develop a caramelized crust and have a pink, juicy center. Ask for chops that are at least an inch thick if you like your lamb medium rare. The whole loin is called a saddle; two loin chops attached by the backbone are called an English chop.

**Sirloin Chop** The thick, inexpensive steaks cut from the fat, sirloin end of the lamb's leg and hip section are tender enough to grill or broil, steak house style, and are wonderful served with mint sauce, scalloped potatoes, and creamed spinach.

Leg This generous cut, which can weigh anywhere from five to nine pounds, is the perennial choice for holiday feasts. The whole leg—which comprises both the narrow shank and the plump sirloin—can be simply seasoned with salt and pepper or a spice rub and roasted with the bone in. The leg is available in several different forms: sirloin end, shank end, short leg, and frenched. You may also ask your butcher to debone and butterfly the leg so that it can be splayed on the grill or stuffed, rolled, tied, and roasted.

**Top Round** This fist-size, one- to two-pound cut is fairly new on the market; it's a large muscle from the leg that has the full flavor of tougher cuts but is tender enough to be grilled or pan-roasted. Grilled, sliced top round makes a perfect centerpiece for a composed salad like the one shown on page 66.









#### LAMB PART FOUR

## Making Sunday Supper

"I LOVE LAMB," SAYS CAMILLE LABRO. "If I had to pick, it would be my favorite meat. It's so velvety, so milky." Labro, a 38-year-old Parisian food writer who is compiling a cookbook of her mother's Provençal recipes, is pulling her wheeled shopping cart past the vendor stalls of the Marché Richard-Lenoir, just off the place de la Bastille in Paris. Her destination is Boucherie Bruno, the stall of a popular butcher who sells only at the market. She's buying ingredients for a favorite Sunday meal: a slow-roasted *gigot d'agneau*,

or leg of lamb, seasoned with herbs and garlic and served with stewed white beans. It's her family's rendition of the classic *gigot de sept heures*, or seven-hour lamb.

It's early in the morning still, but a long line has formed at Boucherie Bruno. Fortunately, Labro placed her order last week. "I learned long ago that if you don't reserve ahead, everything good just disappears," she says, as the butcher hands her a neatly wrapped parcel, which she opens before paying for the meat. Wrapped in the white paper is a plump, four-pound leg of baby lamb from which the butcher has thoughtfully removed the pelvic bone—to make it easier to slice—before tying the leg back together with kitchen twine. Labro smiles. It's perfect.

The French have a special fondness for lamb; they raise some of the best in the world, and chefs and home cooks transform it into a remarkable array of dishes. It's part of their culture, their heritage: the slow-cooked shanks served at bistros; the rib racks crusted with a paste of garlic and parsley, called a *persillade*, and roasted for special occasions; lamb loin chops skewered with a sprig of rosemary and rubbed with olive oil and herbs before being grilled over charcoal. Particularly in regions where sheep's milk is needed for the making of cheese, like Roquefort and Ossau-Iraty, lamb is produced and consumed in great quantities. The lamb Labro has bought comes from the Midi-Pyrénées region, which specializes in milk-fed Aveyron lamb, prized for its succulence.

Back in her apartment, a large, airy flat in the 11th arrondissement, Labro unloads the contents of her cart—herbs, garlic, the lamb, a baguette, a bottle of red wine from the southern Languedoc region—and arranges the ingredients on her kitchen table. She pulls an old

wooden pepper grinder off a shelf and gives it a few turns, sending a coarsely ground mixture of peppercorns into the drawerlike receptacle

in the bottom of the grinder, which she sets aside. She rubs the lamb all over with olive oil; then she retrieves a *cocotte*, a heavy enameled Dutch oven, from a cupboard and sets it over a high flame. Finally, she sprinkles the lamb with the pepper and some coarse salt and nestles it into the *cocotte* to let it sear.

While the lamb browns, Labro breaks open a head of garlic and scatters the unpeeled cloves into an oiled glass casserole dish. Atop the garlic

cloves she builds a loose nest of fresh rosemary sprigs, bay leaves, and savory. "Everyone in Provence grows and loves savory," she says of the peppery herb. "When I taste it, I have a rush of memories from my garden." Once the lamb has browned all over, she removes it from the *cocotte* and places it on top of the herbs in the casserole dish. Next, she empties a leftover bottle of white wine from her refrigerator into the still-sizzling *cocotte*, freeing the caramelized bits from the bottom of the pot, before pouring the mixture of wine and meat juices over the lamb. Into the oven goes the meat, which will cook at 300 degrees or so for most of the afternoon. "In the end," she says, "the lamb should be *confit*: caramelized, sticky to the teeth, almost melting."

The French have a special fondness for lamb; they raise some of the best in the world and transform it into a remarkable array of dishes

Now Labro turns to the beans—small white ones that go by the name coco de Paimpol—which have been soaking in a pot of water overnight. "These are from the Lorraine, like the ones my great-great-grandmother used to make," says Labro, as she sets the pot on the stove to simmer. To the beans she adds a clove-studded onion and a thick bundle of herbs: flat-leaf parsley, thyme, and bay leaves. Later, she'll mix the beans

with a purée of raw garlic and crème fraîche.

Early-afternoon sunlight streams into the kitchen, and the room is filled with a heady aroma of herbs, garlic, wine, and braising lamb. Labro opens the oven door and steals a forkful of tender lamb; it's juicy and rich and almost ready. Brushing a strand of hair from her face, she consults the crumpled piece of paper her mother's recipe is written on, to make sure she's got everything right. "It can be frustrating because my mother never uses measures or gives cooking times," she says. But with dishes this forgiving, those details hardly ever matter. —*Todd Coleman* 

Facing page, clockwise from top left: Camille Labro shopping for ingredients at the Marché Richard-Lenoir in Paris; preparing the ingredients for the stewed beans (see page 66 for a recipe) that will accompany the lamb; serving the lamb; rubbing the leg of lamb with oil before roasting it.









#### LAMB SALAD

SERVES 4-6

Roasted lamb top round, a tender and flavorful cut from the leg, is the centerpiece of this composed salad of earthy mushrooms, crisp potatoes, and a garlicky vinaigrette. Be sure to slice the meat against the grain after roasting for the juiciest results.

- 1 head garlic
- 2 tbsp. canola oil
- 2 tbsp. sherry vinegar
- 2 tbsp. salt-packed capers, rinsed, drained, and finely chopped
- 2 tbsp. minced shallots
- 10 oil-packed anchovy filets, drained and finely chopped
- 12 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 11/2-lb. lamb top round, trimmed
- 6 small red new potatoes (about 1/2 lb.), cut into wedges
- 1 tbsp. chopped fresh rosemary
- 1/4 lb. mushrooms, such as oyster or shiitake, stemmed and torn
- 1 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1 tsp. finely chopped fresh
- 9 cups loosely packed mixed greens, such as frisée and arugula (about 5 oz.)
- 1/2 cup loosely packed mixed flat-leaf parsley and mint leaves
- 2 tbsp. chopped toasted pistachios
- 1 Heat oven to 400°. Cut 1/4" off top of garlic head. Rub garlic with 1 tbsp. canola oil; wrap in foil and transfer to oven. Cook garlic until soft, about 1

hour; set aside to let cool. Squeeze the garlic cloves from their skin and finely chop them into a smooth paste; transfer garlic to a medium bowl along with the vinegar, capers, 1 tbsp. shallots, and anchovies. Slowly whisk in 8 tbsp. olive oil and season with salt and pepper; set vinaigrette aside.

- 2 Season the lamb generously all over with salt and pepper. Heat the remaining canola oil in a 10" castiron skillet over medium-high heat. Add the lamb and cook until meat is browned on all sides, about 12 minutes. Transfer skillet to the oven and cook lamb until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the meat registers 130°, 10-15 minutes. Transfer the lamb to a plate, cover loosely with foil, and let rest for 30 minutes. (Lamb will continue cooking to medium rare as it rests.)
- Increase the oven heat to 475°. In a medium bowl, toss the potatoes with 2 tbsp, of the olive oil and the rosemary; season with salt and pepper. Transfer the potatoes to a rimmed sheet pan and cook, flipping occasionally, until golden brown and tender, about 20 minutes. Set the potatoes aside.
- 4 Heat the remaining olive oil in an 8" skillet over medium-high heat. Add the mushrooms and cook, flipping them once, until browned and crisp, about 5 minutes. Add the remaining shallots, butter, and thyme and cook, stirring frequently, until the flavors meld, about 1 minute more. Set mushrooms aside on a plate.
- Description Put the mixed greens and the herbs into a large bowl. Whisk the vinaigrette and drizzle most of it over the greens. Toss the greens and season them with salt and pepper; transfer the greens to 4-6 plates and divide reserved potatoes and mushrooms between them. Thinly slice lamb against the grain and divide between the plates. Sprinkle remaining vinaigrette over salads and garnish with pistachios.



#### **GIGOT DE SEPT HEURES**

(Seven-Hour Leg of Lamb)

SERVES 6-8

Slow-cooking a leg of lamb in wine with garlic and herbs transforms the meat into an ultratender entrée that goes marvelously with stewed white beans. This recipe is similar to one given to us by the French food writer Camille Labro, who got it from her Provençal mother (see page 64).

#### FOR THE LAMB:

- 1 4-lb. shank end leg of lamb or a 4-lb. piece of shoulder, trimmed
- 3 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 750-ml bottle dry white wine
- 20 cloves garlic, unpeeled
- sprigs each fresh rosemary, thyme, and savory
- 5 fresh or dried bay leaves

#### FOR THE BEANS:

- 2 cups dried white beans, preferably cannellini or white coco (see page 99), soaked overnight
- 5 cloves garlic, smashed
- 3 sprigs fresh thyme and parsley and a bay leaf tied together with kitchen twine
- 10 whole cloves
- 1 large onion, halved Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tbsp. crème fraîche
- Cook the lamb: Heat oven to 300°. Rub lamb with oil and season generously with salt and pepper. Heat a 6-qt. Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add lamb and cook, turning occasionally, until browned on all sides, about

12 minutes. Transfer lamb to a plate. Add wine and 2 cups water to the Dutch oven; scrape up browned bits from bottom of pot. Nestle garlic and herbs into a large oval casserole; place lamb on top of herbs; add pan juices from Dutch oven. Cover lamb with foil: transfer to oven and roast, basting frequently, for 31/2 hours. Uncover, flip lamb, and continue to cook, basting frequently, until lamb is very tender, 3-3 1/2 more hours. Transfer to a rack and let cool for 20 minutes.

2 Meanwhile, prepare the beans: About 11/2 hours before the lamb is done, drain beans and transfer to a 4-qt. saucepan along with 6 cups water, 4 cloves garlic, and the herb bundle. Insert the cloves into the onion and add to the pot. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer until beans are tender, about 1 hour. Remove pot from heat and season with salt and pepper. Discard herbs and strain beans, reserving cooking liquid. Transfer 2 cups beans, 1/4 cup cooking liquid, oil, crème fraîche, and remaining garlic clove to a blender and purée. Stir puréed bean mixture and about 1 cup of the cooking liquid back into pot and cover to keep warm until lamb is cooked. Serve the lamb sliced or torn into chunks, alongside the beans.

Pairing Note: This rich Provençal dish calls for a wine with ripe tannins from the south of France, like the Domaine Leon Barral Faugères 2004 (\$33), from the Languedoc. —Ania Zawieja



#### KIBBEH SHIFTAH **B'SHWANDAR**

(Beet Stew with Lamb Meatballs) SERVES 4-6 For this traditional Iragi-Jewish dish,

#### LAMB

ground-lamb meatballs are braised in a vibrant beet stew. SAVEUR test kitchen assistant Yael Coty learned to make this dish from her grandparents, who left Irag for Israel in 1950.

#### FOR THE MEATBALLS:

- 1 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 small yellow onion, finely chopped
- 1/2 lb. ground lamb
- 2 tbsp. dried currants
- 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> tbsp. chopped flat-leaf parsley leaves
  - 1 tbsp. pine nuts
- 1/2 tsp. paprika
- egg, lightly beaten
   Kosher salt and freshly ground
   black pepper, to taste

#### FOR THE RICE:

- 1½ cups basmati rice, soaked in water for 20 minutes
  - 2 tsp. kosher salt
  - 1 tsp. turmeric

#### FOR THE STEW:

- 6 small red beets (about 1 lb.), peeled and cut into sixths
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped Kosher salt, to taste
- 5 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 11/2 tsp. ground coriander
- 11/2 tsp. ground cumin
- 11/2 tsp. curry powder
  - 1 tsp. turmeric
- 3/4 tsp. paprika
- 1/2 tsp. ground ginger
- 1/8 tsp. cayenne
- medium yellow onion, finely chopped
- 1/4 cup tomato paste
- 6 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 2 tbsp. sugar Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tbsp. finely chopped fresh flatleaf parsley
- Make the meatballs: Heat oil in an 8" skillet over medium-high heat. Add onions and cook, stirring occasionally, until golden brown, about 7 minutes. Remove from heat; let cool slightly. Add onions to a medium bowl along with lamb, currants, parsley, pine nuts, paprika, and egg and com-

bine with your hands. Divide mixture into 12 portions; dip your hands in a bowl of water and roll portions into 11/2" meatballs and transfer to a parchment paper-lined baking sheet. Cover meatballs with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 30 minutes.

- 2 Prepare the rice: Strain rice and transfer to a 2-qt. saucepan along with the salt, turmeric, and 2 cups water. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to low, cover, and cook for 10 minutes. Remove pot from heat and keep covered in a warm place.
- (3) Meanwhile, make the stew: Bring beets and 6 cups water to a boil in a 4-qt. saucepan. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and simmer until beets are tender, about 30 minutes. Remove pot from heat and, using a slotted spoon, transfer beets to a bowl; reserve beet juice.
- 4 Put garlic on a work surface and sprinkle with a little salt; finely chop. Scrape the garlic into a paste with the side of the chef's knife. In a small bowl, combine garlic paste, 3 tbsp. oil, coriander, cumin, curry powder, turmeric, paprika, ginger, and cavenne; set spice paste aside. Heat remaining olive oil in a 6-qt. pot over medium-high heat. Add onions and cook, stirring occasionally, until golden brown, about 7 minutes. Add reserved spice paste and tomato paste and cook, stirring constantly, until mixture is lightly browned, about 3 minutes. Stir in 1 cup of the reserved beet juice. Add remaining beet juice, lemon juice, and sugar; simmer for 5 minutes. Using a spoon, place reserved meatballs in the simmering stew. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, until meatballs are cooked through, about 8 minutes. Skim surface of stew, add reserved beets, and cook for 2 more minutes. To serve, fluff rice with a fork and spoon it into serving bowls along with ladlefuls of the stew and meatballs; season and garnish with parsley.

**Pairing Note:** The earthy 2006 Marqués de Cáceres grenache rosé 2006

(\$9) from Rioja has refreshing spicy notes and pairs well with this earthy dish. -A.Z.



#### LAMB CHOPS WITH MINT SALSA VERDE

SERVES 2

Salsa verde, a Mediterranean condiment flavored with anchovies, capers, and herbs, partners nicely with seared, medium-rare lamb chops.

- 4 1"-thick lamb loin chops (about 1 lb.) or frenched lamb rib
- 2 tbsp. plus <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> cup extra-virgin olive oil Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 cups loosely packed fresh mint leaves, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup flat-leaf parsley leaves, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp. finely chopped fresh tarragon leaves
- 1 tbsp. salt-packed capers, soaked, rinsed, drained, and finely chopped
- 1/4 tsp. crushed red chile flakes
- 6 oil-packed anchovy filets, drained and finely chopped
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- Put lamb into a small baking dish, rub with 2 tbsp. oil, and season with salt and pepper; set aside to let rest for 30 minutes.
- Meanwhile, make the salsa verde: Combine mint, parsley, tarragon, capers, chile flakes, anchovies, and garlic in a medium bowl. Slowly drizzle in remaining oil while stirring with a fork to make the salsa verde; set aside.
- Build a medium-hot fire in a char-

#### **RUBS AND MARINADES**

Lamb goes well with all sorts of distinctively flavored rubs and marinades. The quantities shown below are for cuts large enough to feed four; scale quantities up or down as necessary so that you have enough rub or marinade to cover the meat. Once marinated, the cuts mentioned in the following recipes can be grilled, broiled, or roasted. —Hunter Lewis

#### Chile Rub

This recipe is based on one given to us by SAVEUR contributing editor Rick Bayless. Stem and seed 12 dried guajillo chiles (or substitute 8 ancho chiles) and put them into a bowl; cover with boiling water to let soften for 30 minutes. Drain and transfer to blender along with 5 cloves garlic, 3 tbsp. water, 3 tbsp. cider vinegar, 2 tsp. sugar, 1 tsp. kosher salt, 3/4 tsp. black pepper, 1/4 tsp. ground cumin, and 1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon. Purée until smooth. Rub mixture over a 3-lb, piece of shoulder or leg. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours. Makes 1 1/4 cups.

#### Lemon-Dill Marinade

Fresh herbs marry beautifully with lamb. In a small bowl, whisk together 1 cup dry red wine,  $^3/_4$  cup olive oil, 1 cup roughly chopped fresh dill fronds,  $^1/_2$  cup fresh lemon juice, 3 tbsp. fresh oregano leaves, 1 tbsp. kosher salt, and 1 tbsp. dried mustard. Rub marinade onto two 1-lb. sirloin chops and let marinate for up to 4 hours in the refrigerator. Makes 2 cups.

#### Soy-Honey Marinade

This delicious marinade brings out lamb's natural sweetness. In a bowl, whisk together 1/2 cup soy sauce, 1/3 cup honey, 1/4 cup fresh lime juice, 3 tbsp. Asian sesame oil, 3 tbsp. minced ginger, 6 pods star anise, 2 stemmed and chopped chiles de árbol, and 2 minced garlic cloves. Rub marinade onto two 1-lb. arm or blade chops and let marinate for 1 hour at room temperature or overnight in the refrigerator. Makes 1/2 cup.

coal grill or set gas grill to mediumhigh heat. (Alternatively, heat a castiron grill pan over medium-high heat.) Add loin chops and cook, flipping once, until browned and crusty and cooked to desired temperature, 6–8 minutes for medium rare if using loin chops (rib chops will take only 4 minutes or so to reach medium rare). Transfer lamb to a platter. Stir sauce and drizzle over chops, reserving some of the sauce to serve on the side.

**Pairing Note:** A high-acid, ultracrisp white, such as a txakolina from Spain's Basque Country, matches the briny notes of the salsa verde; try the 2004 txakolina from Uriondo (\$16.99), which has pleasing aromas of lemon and stone fruit. —*A.Z.* 



MOUSSAKA

SERVES 12

This traditional Greek casserole featuring spiced ground lamb and eggplant is based on a version made by Jim Botsacos, the chef-partner of the Greek restaurant Molyvos in New York City.

- 1 28-oz. can whole peeled tomatoes, undrained
- 1/4 cup dried currants
- 4 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 lb. ground lamb
- 1 tsp. cayenne
- 1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp. ground ginger
- 1/4 tsp. ground allspice Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 6 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 2 medium yellow onions, finely chopped
- red bell pepper, stemmed, cored, and finely chopped
- 1 cup red wine
- 11/2 cups canola oil

- 1½ lbs. eggplant, cut crosswise into ¼"-thick slices
  - 1 large russet potato (about 1 lb.), cut crosswise into 1/4"-thick slices
  - 6 tbsp. unsalted butter
  - 1/2 cup flour
- 21/4 cups milk
  - 1 bay leaf Freshly grated nutmeg, to taste
- 1/2 cup plain Greek yogurt
- 3 egg yolks
- 1 cup grated Parmesan
- Purée the tomatoes in a blender and set aside. Put currants into a small bowl and cover with boiling water; let soften for 30 minutes. Drain currants and set aside. Heat 1 tbsp. olive oil in a 6-qt. pot over medium-high heat. Add the lamb, cayenne, cinnamon, ginger, allspice, and salt and pepper and cook, stirring to break up the meat, until browned, about 5 minutes. Transfer lamb to a large strainer set over a bowl and drain; discard any liquid left in the pot. Return pot to the heat and add the remaining olive oil along with the garlic, onions, and bell pepper and cook, stirring occasionally, until soft, about 10 minutes. Add the wine and cook, stirring occasionally, until almost evaporated, 10-15 minutes. Add the reserved tomatoes, currants, and lamb and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer until thickened, about 30 minutes. Remove from the heat and set meat sauce aside.
- 2 Heat the canola oil in 12" skillet over medium-high heat. Working in batches, add the eggplant slices and fry, turning occasionally, until tender, about 5 minutes. Transfer eggplant slices to paper towels. Working in batches, add the potatoes and cook until tender, about 5 minutes, and transfer to paper towels.
- Make a béchamel sauce: Melt butter in a 2-qt. saucepan over medium heat. Add flour and cook, whisking constantly, until pale and smooth, 2 minutes. Whisking constantly, add the milk in a steady stream until incor-

porated; add the bay leaf and cook, whisking often, until reduced to 2 cups, about 15 minutes. Season with salt, pepper, and nutmeg and discard the bay leaf. Let sauce cool for 5 minutes. In a small bowl, whisk together the yogurt and egg yolks and whisk into sauce until smooth.

⚠ Heat oven to 400°. Place the reserved potato slices in the bottom of an oval 3-qt. baking dish (or two 1½-qt. baking dishes) and season with salt and pepper. Put the eggplant slices on top, season with salt and pepper, and then cover with the meat sauce. Pour the béchamel over the top of the meat sauce and spread evenly with a rubber spatula. Sprinkle Parmesan evenly over the top and bake until browned and bubbly, 45-50 minutes. Let cool for at least 20 minutes before serving.



#### RACK OF LAMB WITH ROSEMARY AND THYME

SERVES 2

The classic presentation for a roast rack of lamb calls for frenching the meat: removing the layer of muscle and fat that extends to the end of the rib bones. For step-by-step instructions on how to do this, see page 94.

- 1 1<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>-lb. frenched rack of lamb Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tbsp. roughly chopped fresh rosemary
- 1 tbsp. chopped fresh thyme, plus 4 sprigs
- 10 cloves garlic, smashed

Heat oven to 450°. Season lamb with salt and pepper. Heat oil in a 12" castiron skillet over medium-high heat.

Add lamb fat side down and cook, using tongs to flip and sear the bottom and sides of the rack, until browned, about 10 minutes. Turn lamb fat side up in the skillet and scatter herbs over the top. Add garlic to skillet and transfer to oven. Roast until an instant-read thermometer inserted into center of the meat reads 130° for medium rare, about 10 minutes. Let cool for 5 minutes before slicing into chops and serving.

**Pairing Note:** An elegant rack of lamb calls for a rich red bordeaux. The 2005 Château Haut Mayne (\$17.99), from Graves, shows lovely notes of earth, blackberries, and spice. —*A.Z.* 



#### LAMB NAVARIN

SERVES 4

We based our version of this French lamb stew on a recipe used in courses at the French Culinary Institute in New York City. It calls for tourneing the vegetables: using a knife to transform them into elegant, tapered shapes. For a step-by-step guide, go to SAVEUR.COM/123.

- 2 tbsp. canola oil
- 1½ lbs. trimmed lamb shoulder, cut into 1" cubes Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
  - 5 medium carrots (1 chopped, 4 peeled and cut into 2" pieces)
  - 1 medium yellow onion, chopped
  - 2 cloves garlic, crushed
  - 2 tbsp. flour
  - 1 tbsp. tomato paste
  - 4 medium turnips, peeled and cut into 2" pieces
  - 4 medium new potatoes, peeled and cut into 2" pieces
  - 3 tbsp. unsalted butter
  - 2 tsp. sugar

#### LAMB

- 12 pearl onions, peeled
  1/3 cup fresh or frozen peas
  Finely chopped flat-leaf
  parsley, for garnish
- Meat oven to 350°. Heat oil in a 6-at. Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Season lamb with salt and pepper. Working in batches, add lamb and cook, turning once, until browned, 8-10 minutes. Transfer lamb to a plate; set aside. Add the chopped carrot and yellow onions and cook, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are soft and brown, about 10 minutes. Add garlic, flour, and tomato paste and cook, stirring often, until tomato paste begins to brown, about 2 minutes. Stir in 6 cups water and reserved lamb. Cover, bring to a boil, and transfer to oven; cook until lamb is tender, about 50 minutes
- ② Using a slotted spoon, transfer lamb to a plate and cover with foil to keep warm. Set a sieve over a 4-qt. saucepan and strain cooking liquid. Discard solids. Bring liquid to a boil over medium-high heat, skimming surface occasionally; cook until reduced to 2 1/2 cups, about 25 minutes. Set liquid aside.
- Meanwhile, using a paring knife, trim each piece of remaining carrots, as well as the turnips and potatoes, into elegantly tapered football shapes (see SAVEUR.COM/123; alternatively, cut them into a large dice). Set potatoes aside in a bowl of water. Heat a 12" skillet over medium-high heat and add carrots, butter, sugar, salt, and 1 cup water. Partially cover and cook for 10 minutes. Add turnips and pearl onions, partially cover, and continue cooking until liquid has evaporated and vegetables are tender, about 10 more minutes. Uncover and continue to cook, swirling skillet, until vegetables are golden brown, about 3 minutes. Add 2 tbsp. water, swirl skillet to glaze vegetables, and remove from heat; set aside and keep warm.
- 4 Bring a 4-qt. saucepan of salted water to a boil. Add the reserved pota-

toes, reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer until tender, about 15 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer potatoes to a bowl; set aside.

**⑤** To serve, put the lamb, carrots, turnips, pearl onions, potatoes, and peas into the sauce and cook until hot, about 2 minutes. Divide the stew between bowls. Garnish with parsley.

**Pairing Note:** The Palmina Nebbiolo 2004 (\$40) from California has soft tannins that pair well with the sweet vegetables in this stew. —*A.Z.* 



#### **MERGUEZ**

(Spiced Lamb Sausages)
SERVES 4

Chilling the meat before chopping it is the best way to achieve the semi-coarse texture that is a signature of these North African-style sausages. This version is made without casings.

- 1 Ib. trimmed lamb shoulder, cut into 1" cubes, or 1 lb. ground lamb
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 tbsp. harissa (see page 99)
- 1 tbsp. minced flat-leaf parsley
- 1 tsp. paprika
- 1/2 tsp. ground coriander
- 1/2 tsp. ground cumin
- 1/4 tsp. ground fennel seed Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 4 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 cup yogurt
- 8 leaves basil, roughly chopped Chopped tomatoes, red onions, and cucumbers, for serving Flat bread, for serving
- Put lamb into the bowl of a food processor fitted with the chopping

blade and transfer to freezer to let chill for 30 minutes. Add 2 cloves garlic, harissa, parsley, paprika, coriander, cumin, fennel, salt, and pepper to the bowl; process until lamb is coarsely chopped and mixed with spices, about 15 seconds. (If using ground lamb, just mix lamb with other ingredients in a large bowl.) Divide lamb mixture into 8 portions and form the portions into 3"-wide patties. Heat 2 tbsp. oil in a 12" cast-iron skillet

over medium-high heat. Add lamb patties and cook, turning once until browned and still slightly pink, about 6-8 minutes. Transfer merguez to paper towels; set aside.

② Meanwhile, stir together remaining garlic and oil, yogurt, and basil in a small bowl to make a sauce; season with salt and pepper. Serve merguez on a platter with sauce, chopped vegetables, and flat bread.

#### FOUR CLASSIC SAUCES

Lamb's distinctive flavor takes well to a remarkable variety of sauces, from sweet fruit chutneys to salty tapenades. Here are four sauces to accompany a range of cuts and cooking styles. For the best flavor and presentation, the sauces described below should be served at room temperature and should be stirred again just before serving. —Hunter Lewis

#### Potato Skordalia

There are many versions of skordalia, a thick, garlicky Greek sauce; this one makes an excellent accompaniment to grilled lamb. Put 1 peeled russet potato cut into 1" pieces into a 2-qt. pot of salted water and bring to a boil. Cook until tender, about 15 minutes; drain and transfer to a large bowl. Mash potatoes until smooth. Smash 8-10 peeled garlic cloves, sprinkle them with 1/2 tsp. kosher salt, and make a paste by finely chopping garlic and repeatedly scraping it against work surface. Add garlic paste to potatoes and vigorously whisk in 1 cup extra-virgin olive oil, 1/3 cup ground blanched almonds, and 1 tbsp. red wine vinegar. Season with kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste. Serve immediately or refrigerate overnight. Makes about 2 cups.

#### Pistou

This aromatic sauce of basil, Parmesan, and garlic is often served with sliced roast lamb in southern France. Into a food processor put  $6^{1/2}$  cups loosely packed basil leaves, 3/4 cup grated Parmesan, 3 tbsp. extra-vir-

gin olive oil, 3 roughly chopped garlic cloves, and 3 tbsp. pine nuts. Season with kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste. Pulse until finely chopped; add 3 tbsp. more oil and process until sauce thickens and comes together. Makes about 1 cup.

#### **Apricot Chutney**

This savory-sweet English-style chutney goes well with lamb roasts or braised lamb shanks. Heat 3 tbsp. canola oil and 1 tsp. curry powder in a 2-qt. saucepan over medium heat. Cook, stirring frequently, until curry powder is fragrant, about 2 minutes. Add 1 minced small onion, 1 minced garlic clove, and one 1" piece peeled minced ginger and cook, stirring occasionally, until soft, about 10 minutes. Add 3/4 cup chopped dried apricots and 1/3 cup raisins along with 1 cup water, 2 tbsp. fresh lime juice, and 2 tbsp. sugar. Cook, stirring occasionally, until thickened, about 20 minutes. Makes 2 cups.

#### Tapenade

This briny and bold-tasting Mediterranean sauce is ideal for roast lamb. Into a food processor put <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> cup pitted dry-cured black olives, 6 drained oil-packed anchovy filets, 2 roughly chopped garlic cloves, 3 tbsp. sliced almonds, <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> cup rinsed salted capers, and 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil. Purée ingredients; add 6 more tbsp. oil a little at a time. Season sauce with 1 tbsp. fresh lemon or orange juice and freshly ground black pepper, to taste. Refrigerate overnight before serving. Makes about 1 cup.











of Buggiano. Just as they have every year for as long as most residents of this tiny Tuscan hill town can remember, the group of a dozen or so local women met in the *circolo*, the little bar and social club off the main square, to plan the menu for the town's annual grand summer dinner, known as La Cena. At that first July meeting, as men played cards at the other tables, we talked about roast pork, which has traditionally been the Cena's main dish. The committee

members were enthusiastic about a sauce of prunes and oranges that Vanna Disperati, the robust, 60-something woman who has managed the Cena for many years, had made for them recently. It was quickly agreed that this sauce would be the perfect match for the pork. But when I showed up for the next meeting, only a week later, the decision had been made to replace that sauce with an herb stuffing. When I asked why, Miranda Vitali, another committee member, told me that the prune-and-orange-flavored roast pork was "too wintry." Vanna confided to me later that prunes were just too expensive.

The third meeting of the women's committee was dominated by a discussion of the antipasti. Over the years, ambitious spreads had been served—the scores of small dishes were marched out ceremoniously to a long buffet table set in the middle of the piazza, or village square—and this year the women were determined to outdo themselves, a decision heralded by the name they chose for the soon-to-be-printed menu: Buf-

fet di Antipasti Fantasia. In the end, we came up with a list of more than 25 dishes. Several new ideas were put forward. After some spirited debate, Gabriella Arrigoni's tuna and pickled onion crostini met with the committee's approval. But I encountered resistance when I proposed to contribute an herbed tomato tart. "We have so much already," said Vanna. But the others bravely stood by me, and so, for the first time since I moved to Buggiano, more than

three decades ago, I was given a chance to add something to the dinner. The approval of other fare went more smoothly. Daniela Cardelli would bring a beloved bread soup, and Vanna would make her renowned maccheroni, two-inch squares of fresh pasta covered with a richly aromatic ragù. As for the desserts, we would follow long-standing tradition: almost every household in the village would supply a sweet, making for an extravagant "Fantasia di Dolci."

BUGGIANO, ONE OF MANY MEDIEVAL fortified hilltop villages in northern Tuscany, overlooks the Valdinievole, a broad valley that encompasses some 160 square miles in the provinces of Pistoia and Firenze. It is an enticing place, snug against the Apennine foothills and partially enclosed in ancient stone walls. A weed-covered 15th-century stone portal, reminiscent of a Piranesi etching, beckons visitors into the winding streets, which lead to the medieval piazza, the village's high



point. Just down a path from the square stands the small farmhouse that my husband and I purchased 30-odd years ago. We'd bought it impulsively as a vacation home after visiting the village from our home in Jerusalem, but eventually we decided to take advantage of our "mobile" professions—my husband was a historian and biographer and I'm a food writer—and settle here for good.

Many Tuscan villages hold communal meals and *sagre*, outdoor festivals that celebrate the harvest of a cherished local food. In the province of Pistoia, of which Buggiano is a part, olives—frantoios, leccinos, pendolinos, and other oil-making varieties—are widely harvested, and lemons, citrons, clementines, and other citrus fruits thrive in gardens throughout the village. Such gatherings are a testament to Tuscans' abiding attachment to the seasonal rituals that have been the foundation of rural life in the region for centuries, despite the fact that nowadays a large portion of the residents of Tuscan villages, including Buggiano, commutes to work in nearby cities.

In Buggiano, we have several communal suppers, but our Cena (the name simply means dinner) is special. It is held in the piazza, a square paved with hand-chiseled stones and bordered by a 13th-century *palazzo pretorio*, or town hall, and the imposing belfry of an 11th-century church. The meal is lavish, distinguished by both the abundance and the variety of its foods. The feast, which raises money for cultural events in the village, attracts dozens of visitors from neighboring towns, and over the years it has come to crystallize for me the simple joys and sensual pleasures that first drew me to this part of Tuscany.

Clockwise from facing page, top left: a house number on a home in Buggiano's medieval center; a feline denizen; filling baskets with lemons, which grow in backyards all over the village, for table decorations; grilled red peppers; Florio Bechini, a visitor from a nearby village; a view of Buggiano; roast pork loin; the menu for the feast; young attendees.

"The dinner really cements the feeling of family," Miranda Vitali once told me, "even for us new people." It is telling that Miranda, a vivacious redhead in her 40s who has lived in Buggiano for ten years and grew up in a nearby town, still considers herself a newcomer to this hamlet of 130 people. Old-timers in Buggiano descend from just a few farming and artisan families and generally keep to themselves. During our first summer here, my husband and I would saunter through the tightly shuttered village every morning with our two-year-old daughter, Danae. Few people ventured outdoors during the day, and a week could go by without a neighborly conversation. After a time, though, windows would open and someone would call out a friendly "Ciao, Danae!" Everyone seemed to know our daughter's name and that foreigners had moved into the old farmhouse below the square. The piazza was Danae's playground, and eventually we got to know our neighbors by spending time there; we soon felt warmly welcomed.

But when it came to food—no matter that (continued on page 78)

BETH ELON is the author of A Culinary Traveller in Tuscany: Exploring and Eating off the Beaten Track (Little Bookroom, 2006).







(continued from page 75) I'd written cookbooks on Italian cuisine, had reestablished an old vineyard and olive grove on our house's property, and took pride in my culinary skills—I was suspect. "Grazie, non ti preoccupi [Thanks, but don't bother]" was the usual reply when I volunteered to prepare food for any of the *feste*. I just could not be trusted with such a thing. I might help set the tables, but that was about all. So, this year, my sitting in on the planning committee meetings and being allowed to offer my herbed tomato tart felt like a rite of initiation.

BY NINE O'CLOCK ON THE MORNING of the Cena, I'd already assembled my four large tomato tarts, so I decided to pay a visit to some of the other committeewomen, who were doing the final cooking and preparation for the meal—which would be attended by some 200 people—in their homes. I found Noemi Disperati, a serious-faced 64-year-old who is a cousin of Vanna's by marriage, in her kitchen, methodically peeling and slicing a formidable pile of white button mushrooms for mushroom crostini, or toasts. A short while later I dropped in on Franca Biondi; she had just finished grinding 20 pounds of chicken liver to make the pâté for her famous *crostini di fegatini*—the most popular and traditional version of crostini.

In Paola Canepari's kitchen, just down the road in a restored guard-house that still bears a Medici coat of arms over the front door, more than 200 tomatoes were resting in baking dishes. I helped Paola, a pretty brunette in her 50s, stuff the tomatoes with a mixture of bread crumbs, capers, basil, and parsley. Later, she'd take them to the village bakery,

Clockwise from far left: Gabriella Arrigoni with tuna and pickled onion crostini; stuffed tomatoes; a greeting between friends; the façade of a house in the town center; the main buffet table at La Cena (the author's herbed tomato tart is in the foreground, at left); a road sign outside Buggiano; guests at La Cena; a pear and walnut tart; a path at the edge of the village.

where they'd be cooked in the huge oven alongside the pork roasts.

The summer afternoon's heat in Buggiano is intense, so no one thinks of serving a big meal in the piazza before well into evening. And it's a good thing, because there was still plenty to do later that afternoon, even after most of the food had been prepared. At around six, Luciano Disperati, Vanna's husband, transported the pork roasts from the bakery's oven to the square in his three-wheeled mini pickup truck along with some of the equipment he'd need in order to help ready the piazza for the party.

I'd arrived in the square around five to help dress the dining tables with white linen tablecloths and runners made of ivy boughs. I also set out bottles of red table wine made in the nearby village of Montecarlo. Meanwhile, in several of the town hall's rooms, the final touches were being applied to the dishes that had been carried from homes around the village. In one room, Daniela Cardelli and her husband, Vincenzo, an accomplished gardener, had just carted in an enormous tureen of Daniela's borlotti bean and vegetable soup. In a second room awaited a mouthwatering array of crèmes, nut cakes, tarts, fruits, and other desserts. Next door several women were spreading toppings on



# THE GUIDE

Tuscany

Sagre, or village feasts, offer an excellent introduction to a town's traditional dishes, ingredients, and wines. Unlike the communal supper in Buggiano, which is open only to members of the village's cultural association, many Tuscan sagre, like the ones described below, are open to the public and often last for several days. Virtuoso, a global travel service, arranges custom-designed visits to Tuscany. Go to www.virtuoso.com for details.

#### WHAT TO DO

FESTA DI SAN MARTINO E DEI BRINGOLI (Feast of Saint Martin and Bringoli) Anghiari, Provincia di Arezzo, Tuscany, November 7-8 (www.anghiari.it) At this festa, cured meats, vino novello (young wine), and other delicacies are served with locally made bringoli, a wheat-flour pasta that is traditionally accompanied by a meat or mushroom sauce.

#### SAGRA DEL FUNGO AMIATINO

(Feast of the Amiato Mushroom) Bagnolo, Provincia di Grosseto, Tuscany, October 3-11 (www.lama remmafabene.it) Several varieties of mushroom thrive in the hills surrounding this village in southern Tuscany. At the multiday festival, cooks—both in the town's restaurants and at streetside stalls—make the most of the bounty by including freshly harvested mushrooms in an impressive array of local specialties, among them tagliatelle with cinghiale, or wild boar.

LA SAGRA DEL GALLETTO (Feast of the Rooster) Camigliano, Provincia di Caserta, Tuscany, October 4 (www.prolocomontalcino.it) Observed since the 14th century in the medieval town of Camigliano, this sagra is one of the region's most important festivals. Chickens spit-roasted over charcoal, along with fruit pies cooked in woodburning ovens, are highlights.

LA SAGRA DELLE CASTAGNE (Feast of the Chestnuts) Marradi, Provincia di Firenze, Tuscany, October 4, 11, 18, and 25 (www.sagradellecast agne.it) Chestnuts—cultivated in and around this town on Tuscany's eastern fringe—are the honored ingredient at this festival, which takes place on each of the four Sundays of October: chestnut-filled tortelli, chestnut cakes, chestnut jams, and chestnut ice cream, among other dishes.

the Truffle) Montaione, Provincia di Firenze, Tuscany, October 25 (www.comune.montaione.fi.it) Tuscany's renowned white truffle, harvested in October and November, remains central to the culinary life of this village, just southwest of Florence. Antipasti, salads, pastas—the earthy-tasting fungus finds its way into almost every kind of local dish served at the town's restaurants and trattorias during this single-day celebration.

LA SAGRA DEL TARTUFO (Feast of

LA SAGRA DEL TORDO (Feast of the Thrush) Montalcino, Provincia di Siena, Tuscany, October 25 (www .prolocomontalcino.it) Visitors to this festa—which celebrates the beginning of the local hunting season in southern Tuscany—can savor a variety of traditional dishes, among them pinci, a spaghetti-like pasta.

#### TUSCAN FEAST

bread slices for the various kinds of crostini that would be served, as others laid out bowls of Tuscan olives sprinkled with grated lemon peel and used their hands to break hunks of Parmigiano-Reggiano into bite-size pieces. I noticed that my tomato tarts had been sliced into neat squares.

By 7:30, the piazza had been transformed. Even though I've attended many Cenas, the sight never ceases to move me, rekindling a sense of communion with this singular place. Strings of cheerful white lights dangled over the square, and a feeling of anticipation pervaded the air. I raced home to clean up and change my clothes. When I returned, at around eight, guests were arriving in the gathering dusk; they milled about, sipping glasses of prosecco and snacking on puff pastry antipasti that the committee member Gabriella Meoni had made. Alessandro Vezzani, a musician who lives in a nearby town, had set up an electronic keyboard and was playing jaunty tunes. Everywhere I looked, old friends were embracing and admiring the beautiful piazza. All the guests had paid to attend the dinner, and yet the gathering had the feel of a giant family reunion.

As soon as everyone was seated and Giancarlo Panconesi, the president of the village's cultural association, had given a short speech, Alessandro



struck up a triumphal march. At that moment, we committeewomen made our grand entry into the square, each bearing a tray of antipasti and setting it on the buffet table. Amid lots of oohs and aahs, the great rush to the buffet was on. Plates were filled and then filled again. Guests ate with gusto, and I marveled at the power of this simple, homemade food to bring so many people together, to cheer and energize them.

Finally, when we deemed the antipasti course to be finished, the other committeewomen and I leapt up to clear away the plates. The next course came out a bit more quietly than the first: tureens of bread soup and plates of Vanna's maccheroni. They were the perfect prelude to the pork roasts, which had been carved in the town hall just minutes earlier. The meat was redolent of herbs and garlic. Roasted potatoes, the baked tomatoes, and big bowls of mixed-greens salad were placed on the table alongside the pork.

A contented, chatty calm fell over the crowd after the main courses had been cleared away and the desserts were readied. Finally, well after ten o'clock, the Fantasia di Dolci was paraded out to a round of applause. Amid the scores of gorgeous fruits and sweets, my favorite was Gabriella Meoni's delicious pear and nut tart. And though I could not have imagined such a thing was possible after beholding the spread of rich sweets, the desserts were all eaten. Not a spoonful remained in any of the serving dishes. Glasses of homemade limoncello—a lemon liqueur that is a village specialty—were poured as some of the men moved the buffet table to make room for dancing, which lasted well into the night.

Tired as I was, I danced too, happy with my success at this year's Cena. I hadn't failed to notice that, of all the antipasti, my tomato tarts had been among the first to disappear.



#### TORTA DI POMODORI

(Herbed Tomato Tart)
SERVES 12-16

For illustrated instructions on assembling the pastry crust for this tart, go to SAVEUR.COM/ISSUE123.

- 2 9" x 11" sheets frozen puff pastry, thawed and chilled
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 4 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 12 anchovy filets in oil, drained and finely chopped
- 3 lbs. cherry or grape tomatoes Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1/4 cup finely chopped flat-leaf parsley
- 2 tbsp. finely chopped fresh
- 2 tbsp. finely chopped fresh oregano Freshly grated nutmeg
- Heat oven to 375°. Fit pastry sheets side by side into a parchment paper-lined 13" x 17 3/4" rimmed baking pan, pressing pastry against bottom and sides. Trim inner edges of pastry sheets so that they form a seam in center; trim pastry hanging over sides of pan. Prick bottom of pastry with a fork. Line bottom and sides of pastry with parchment paper and fill with dried beans. Bake until
- © Recipes for grilled eggplant, stuffed tomatoes, tuna crostini, and mushroom crostini at SAVEUR.COM/ISSUE123

edges of tart are golden, 25 minutes. Remove beans and parchment paper, sprinkle Parmesan over tart shell, and bake until cheese is melted and tart shell is golden all over, 15–20 minutes. Transfer to a rack; let cool.

- 2 Heat oven to broil and arrange a rack 4" from heating element. In a large bowl, mix together oil and anchovies; add tomatoes and season with salt and pepper. Toss to coat. Transfer tomato mixture to a rimmed baking sheet and broil, shaking pan once or twice, until tomatoes blister, 12-14 minutes. Let cool slightly. Use a slotted spoon to transfer the tomato mixture to the prepared tart shell; distribute tomatoes evenly.
- Increase oven heat to 425°. In a medium bowl, combine the parsley, chives, oregano, and nutmeg; sprinkle herb mixture evenly over the tomatoes. Return tart to oven and bake until hot, about 15 minutes. Let tart cool slightly before serving.



#### **CROSTINI DI FEGATINI**

(Chicken Liver Crostini)
SERVES 12

A version of this recipe appears in *Flavors of Tuscany* (Broadway Books, 1998) by Nancy Harmon Jenkins.

- 6 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 lb. chicken livers, trimmed
- 4 anchovy filets in oil, drained and finely chopped
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 1 medium carrot, finely chopped
- 1 rib celery, finely chopped
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp. vin santo or sherry
- 1/4 cup chicken broth
- 1/4 cup finely chopped flat-leaf parsley
- 2 tbsp. salted capers, rinsed and chopped
- 2 tbsp. fresh lemon juice plus 1 tbsp. lemon zest Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 baguette, cut into 36 slices

#### TUSCAN FEAST

- Heat 3 tbsp. oil in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat. Rinse chicken livers and pat dry with paper towels. Add to skillet and cook, flipping once, until browned and slightly pink on the inside, about 4 minutes. Remove skillet from heat, transfer livers to a cutting board using a slotted spoon (so oil is left behind), and finely chop them. Transfer to a plate and set aside.
- 2 Return skillet to medium-high heat. Add anchovies and cook, stirring frequently, until they dissolve in the oil, 2-3 minutes. Add onions, carrots, celery, and garlic; cook, stirring, until soft, 10 minutes. Add vin santo and cook, stirring, until evaporated, about 30 seconds. Add chicken broth and cook until liquid is mostly evaporated, about 2 minutes. Add livers and their juices, along with parsley, capers, lemon juice, and zest; season mixture with salt and pepper and cook until hot, about 2 minutes. Remove skillet from heat; let cool slightly. Transfer liver mixture to bowl of a food processor and pulse until chunky (or, if you prefer, purée until smooth). Refrigerate. Put bread on a baking sheet and brush with remaining oil; bake until golden, about 10 minutes. Let cool slightly, then spoon liver mixture over toasts and serve.

**Pairing Note** An intense, sweet wine like the 2007 Santa Julia Late Harvest Torrontes (\$10), from Argentina, will complement the richness of the liver.

—Ania Zawieja



#### ARISTA DI MAIALE

(Roast Pork Loin) SERVES 8-10

Stuffing a butterflied pork loin with herbs and wrapping it with prosciutto keeps the meat juicy and flavorful.

- 1 lemon5 tbsp. chopped fresh rosemary
- 25 fresh sage leaves, minced
- 12 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 4-lb. boneless pork loin, trimmed
   Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 12 thin center-cut slices prosciutto di Parma (3 oz.)
- 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 large onion, cut into thick rings
- **1** Heat oven to 375°. Zest lemon, slice in half, and set aside. Pile zest, rosemary, sage, and garlic on a cutting board; chop together with a knife until combined; set herb mixture aside.
- ② Using a knife, butterfly pork loin (see instructions below). Season both sides with salt and pepper; rub both sides with herb mixture; roll loin. Wrap pork in prosciutto; tie with kitchen twine (see instructions below).
- ⓐ Heat oil in a 12" skillet over mediumhigh heat. Cook pork roast, turning occasionally, until browned on all sides, about 12 minutes. Transfer pork to a plate. Nestle onion slices in skillet and pour in ½ cup water; put pork on top of onions. Roast, basting occasionally with pan juices, until an instant-read thermometer inserted into middle of roast registers 140°, 45−50 minutes. Transfer pork to a cutting board; let rest for 20 minutes. Slice pork; transfer to a platter along with onions.

Squeeze juice of reserved lemon into skillet; whisk. Serve pan juices with the pork and onions.

**Pairing Note** A classic Tuscan red like the Donatella Cinelli Colombini 2004 Rosso di Montalcino (\$22), which has a hint of rosemary on the nose, goes well will this herbed pork roast. —A.Z.



#### **CROSTATA DI PERE E NOCI**

(Pear and Walnut Tart)
SERVES 8-10

Covering the rim of the tart shell with foil during part of the cooking will ensure that the edges won't burn.

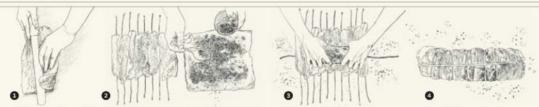
- 2 cups flour, plus more
- 1/2 cup plus 3 tbsp. sugar
- 1/2 tsp. kosher salt
- 12 tbsp. unsalted butter (1 ½ sticks), cubed and chilled
- 1 whole egg plus 1 egg white, lightly beaten together
- 1 cup golden or sultana raisins
- 1 cup brandy
- 2 Ibs. firm ripe Bosc pears, peeled, halved, cored, and thinly sliced crosswise
- 2 tbsp. fresh lemon juice

- 1 cup chopped walnuts
- 8 amaretti cookies, crushed

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- 1 In a bowl, whisk together flour, 1/2 cup sugar, and salt. Add 8 tbsp. butter; work butter into flour until it resembles coarse sand. Add egg mixture; stir to form a dough. Briefly knead dough on a floured surface. Press dough into a disk; wrap in plastic wrap; chill for 2 hours. Working on a floured surface, roll dough into a 13" circle about 3/16" thick. Transfer dough to an 11" removable-bottom tart pan set on a baking sheet; press dough into pan. Trim edges of dough; prick bottom with a fork. Cover tart shell with plastic wrap; chill in freezer for 20 minutes.
- 2 Heat oven to 400°. Place a 13" circle of parchment paper inside tart shell; fill with dried beans. Bake until edges brown, about 20 minutes. Remove paper and beans; continue baking until browned all over, 18–20 minutes. Let cool.
- Meanwhile, put raisins into a bowl; cover with brandy; let sit for 20 minutes. In a bowl, combine remaining sugar, pears, and lemon juice; transfer mixture to cooled tart shell. Drain raisins; scatter over pears. Sprinkle walnuts and cookies over pears. Dot top with remaining butter; cover rim of tart with strips of foil. Bake until tart is golden and bubbly, 45−50 minutes. Let cool; serve.

#### PREPARING ARISTA DI MAIALE



Start by placing a 4-lb. pork loin perpendicular to you on a work surface. Using a long knife, start cutting into the meat along its long edge, keeping knife roughly 1/2" above the work surface; continue slicing inward so that the meat unrolls 3 and splays open. Set pork to the side and arrange ten 16"-long pieces of kitchen twine per-

pendicular to you, each one spaced 1/2" from the next; lay one 36"-long piece of twine across the shorter lengths. Lay 6 slices of prosciutto side by side atop and parallel to the short lengths of twine. Season both sides of pork loin with salt and pepper and rub both sides with herb mixture ②. Roll pork into a cylinder and place it on top of

prosciutto slices 3. Lay 6 more prosciutto slices over pork, tucking edges of bottom slices under top ones. Bring ends of long piece of twine up over ends of pork loin, pull twine taut, and tie ends together. Bring ends of each short piece of twine together, pull taut, and tie together 4. Trim excess twine.

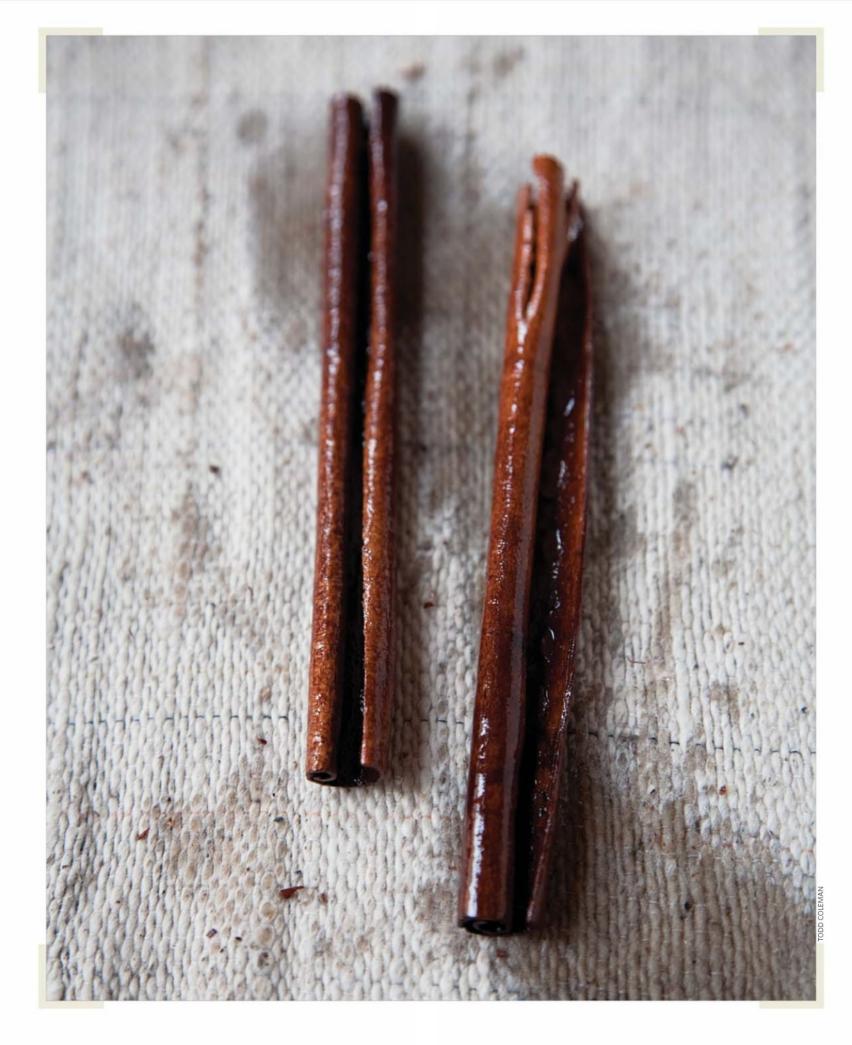
—Hunter Lewis

# SWEET, HOT

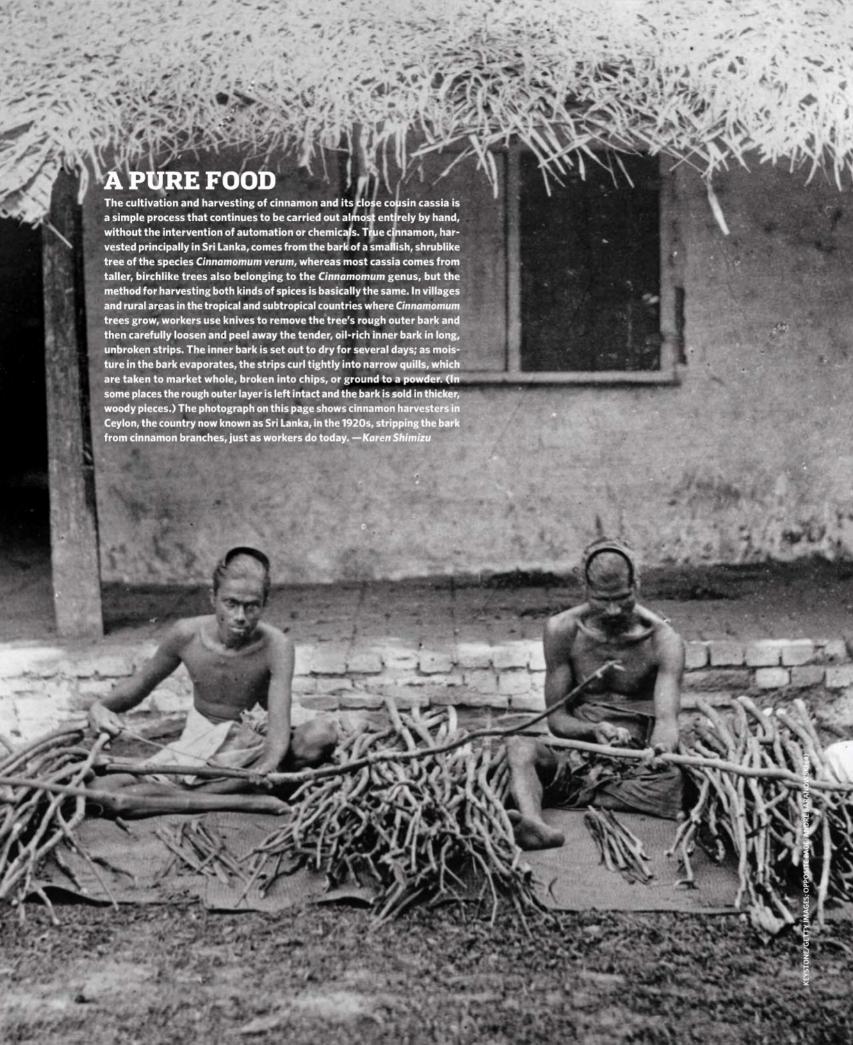
# The most familiar of spices in American kitchens, cinnamon can also be surprising, seductive, and remarkably versatile

Daxaca. At 9,000-odd feet above sea level, winded and tired, I stopped at a remote bodega. Inside, coffee was brewing in a ceramic pot; it was sweetened with piloncillo sugar and infused with a spice called canela in that part of the world. I recognized that spice immediately as cinnamon, but it took me by surprise nonetheless. One sip of the drink, tingly on the tongue and deeply warming, reawakened my senses to the spectacular mountaintop setting; beyond that, it got me thinking about a flavor I'd more or less taken for granted up to that point. I went on to discover that what I'd tasted in Mexico was true cinnamon, a relatively mellow, subtly floral spice quite different from the one that I and most other Americans grew up eating in apple pie, cinnamon red hots, and cinnamon toast. That spice, it turns out, is cinnamon's punchier cousin cassia. I've since come to appreciate the different nuances and associations that each of these spices brings to my cooking—how a dash of cinnamon takes a meaty tomato sauce in a Greek direction, or how a spoonful of the spice transforms a pork hash into a zesty Mexican picadillo. A stick of cassia simmered in a pot of (continued on page 86)

# By Sara Dickerman







#### CINNAMON

(continued from page 82) Vietnamese pho profoundly enriches and enlivens the beef broth. In bisteeya, the Moroccan pigeon pie, it's the gentle bite of cinnamon that binds the sweet and savory elements into a harmonious whole.

It's hard to look at a plastic container of cinnamon on the supermarket shelf and understand how valuable the stuff once was, but in premodern times, it was more than just a flavoring; it was a perfume fit for prayer or seduction, it was medicine, and, as Tom Standage notes in An Edible History of Humanity (Walker & Company, 2009), spices like it were "thought to be splinters of paradise that had found their way into the ordinary world." Both cinnamon and cassia were known in Europe throughout antiquity, though their sources were long kept secret. Contrary to Herodotus's fifth-century B.C. account—probably passed along by Arab spice traders jealously guarding their hold on the market—the spices were not stolen from the nests of giant birds or harvested from a lake infested with batlike monsters, but they did make extraordinary journeys to the West even so, sailing with the trade winds across the Indian Ocean or trekking overland across Asia.

Christopher Columbus, after reaching the islands of the Caribbean, wrote to his patrons in the Spanish court, "I believe I have discovered rhubarb and cinnamon." This was no small matter, as it was the demand for spices such as cinnamon, nutmeg, and pepper, above all else, that prompted 15th-century Europeans to launch their ships toward the New World. The adventurers who followed in Columbus's wake never found cinnamon or cassia in the Americas (the spices are native to Asia), but the far-reaching trade networks they mapped out ultimately made the spices both essential and easy to come by in kitchens around the world.

TRUE CINNAMON COMES from a Sri Lankan tree of the species *Cinnamomum verum* (also called *Cinnamomum zeylanicum*) or, more precisely, from its oil-rich bark, which is hand harvested, scraped clean of its woody outer layer, and dried in delicate, multilayered quills (see "A Pure Food," page 85); whole or ground, it has a mellow flavor, warm and

sweet all at once. Cassia comes from several species of tree also belonging to the *Cinnamomum* genus, with significant harvests in Indonesia, Vietnam, China, and the Indian Subcontinent (see "A Cinnamon Glossary," at right). Its bark is thicker than cinnamon's, making for stiffer, sturdier quills. Cassia is sharper in taste, with a pronounced heat. It can also have a bitter edge and for that reason is often knocked as inferior to cinnamon. In truth, each spice offers its own advantages.

True cinnamon lends itself to slow stewing and steeping, as well as to sweet applications; its round, clean flavor never comes on too strong. Think of a pot of rice pudding with a couple of cinnamon sticks in it: the heat of the milk coaxes out the spice's lilting perfume. Mulled wines, sweet-toned Mexican moles, aromatic North African tagines, and chocolate desserts all benefit from the soft nuzzle of true cinnamon.

Cassia works well when you're looking to give a dish a bit of backbone or to offset sweetness with a good, spicy kick: in chutneys, Southeast Asian curries, and snickerdoodle cookies, to name a few. I take care not to overuse or overcook cassia, lest a dish develop the tannic bitterness that is the hallmark of bad cinnamon buns everywhere. To explore the character of both spices, make cinnamon toast with each one: both cassia and cinnamon have fat-soluble flavor compounds (notably, hot cinnamaldehyde and sweet eugenol) that bloom in the warm butter, but the toast topped with cassia will prickle with mild heat and pleasing bitterness, while the gentle taste of true cinnamon will linger quietly and sweetly on the palate.

Whichever spice I happen to have on hand, I still love to cook the dishes of my youth, but I also bring cassia and cinnamon to the table in other ways, in the hope that a wide-ranging culinary repertoire will help to nurture a broad worldview in my son and daughter. When they are older, my children will be nostalgic not just for cinnamon toast and apple pie but also for the fragrant red-braised pork of China's Hunan Province and Oaxacan hot chocolate infused with that cheering glow of canela.

### A CINNAMON GLOSSARY

Some 50 different plants belonging to the genus *Cinnamomum* are cultivated throughout the world. The products derived from these plants are sold as quills, chips, powder, buds, leaves, and oil. Often what's sold as cinnamon is actually a form of cassia—that is, one of a number of species of *Cinnamomum* that have a flavor sharper than that of true cinnamon. Below and on the facing page is a guide to both spices' predominant forms, aliases, and uses. (See THE PANTRY, page 99, for sources.) —*Ben Mims* 

- ③ Only Cinnamomum verum (a k a C. zeylanicum), often labeled Ceylon cinnamon or Sri Lankan cinnamon, qualifies as true cinnamon. The cinnamon tree's inner bark is rolled into golden, layered quills that are mellower in flavor and more brittle than quills of cassia. True cinnamon originated in Sri Lanka but also grows in Madagascar, India, the Seychelles, and Latin America.
- 2 The **outer bark** of true cinnamon is sometimes left intact, making for rougher, woodier pieces with a more bitter flavor.
- ② Cinnamomum cassia, one of the most widely cultivated cassias in the world, is harvested on a large scale in China. Chinese cassia is harvested after only four to five years, before the bark has accumulated high concentrations of fragrant oil, and is therefore less potent than Vietnamese cassia (see below).
- Oinnamomum cassia that is grown in Vietnam, labeled either Vietnamese cassia or Saigon cinnamon, is harvested no sooner than 15 to 20 years after planting. Its thicker bark (shown here in chip form) looks and tastes so different from Chinese cassia's that it was once thought to come from a separate species. The Vietnamese version has a far more robust and peppery kick.
- **3 Ground cinnamons and cassias** are widely available and convenient to cook with, but because they lose potency as they age, it's important to use them within six months of purchase.
- Cassia leaves, called tejpat in Hindi, are used in India much as bay leaves are in the West. Dried or fresh, they bring sweet, spicy undertones to curries and rice-based dishes.
- Indian cassia (Cinnamomum tamala) has a lower oil content than other cassias, but as its outer bark is usually left intact, it has a tannic bite nevertheless. It is sold in broken shards, often mixed with the bark of closely related Himalayan species.
- **3** Korintje cassia is a premium-quality Indonesian cassia (*Cinnamomum burmannii*; see below) harvested from trees grown around Indonesia's highest volcanic peak. The cool climate produces a slow-growing tree with a high concentration of fragrant oil and a rich reddish hue to its bark.
- ② Clovelike **cassia buds**, used for pickling, mulling, and tea, are the immature flowers of Chinese cassia trees. They have a more floral, fruity scent than the bark and less of a bitter edge.
- The spice sold as cinnamon in U.S. supermarkets is usually **Indonesian cassia**, a lesser-quality *Cinnamomum burmannii*. Grown in lowland forests, this cassia has a lower oil content than the mountain-grown Korintje kind but still packs a punch.
- Cinnamon and cassia oils, used in baked goods, candy, cosmetics, and potpourris, are distilled from bark fragments, leaves, and buds and contain potent concentrations of cinnamaldehyde, a fiery compound in all cinnamons and cassias.







#### CINNAMON

Although there are differences in flavor between true cinnamon and cassia and even between individual types of cassia, the recipes below contain no prescriptions regarding variety or grade. Use whatever you have at hand, and the results will be delicious. Or, take the opportunity to experiment with different cinnamons and cassias; each of these dishes is designed to let the spices' unique qualities shine through. (See THE PANTRY, page 99, for sources.)



(Cuban Pork Hash) SERVES 6-8

Serve this hash with warm corn tortillas and stewed black beans.

- 2 tbsp. canola oil
- 1 4" stick cinnamon
- 1 large yellow onion, chopped
- 1 green bell pepper, stemmed, seeded, and chopped
- 1 tbsp. ground cinnamon, halved
- 11/2 tsp. dried oregano
- 1/8 tsp. ground cloves
- 4 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 lbs. ground pork Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 3/4 cup raisins
- 3/4 cup green pimiento-stuffed olives, halved
- 28-oz. can whole peeled tomatoes, undrained, crushed
- 1/2 cup slivered almonds, toasted
- 1 tbsp. red wine vinegar

Heat oil in a 12" cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat. Add cinnamon stick, onions, and peppers; cook, stirring, until vegetables are soft, about 10 minutes. Add half the ground cinnamon, oregano, cloves, and garlic and cook until fragrant, about 2 minutes. Add pork and cook, breaking it up with a wooden spoon, until it browns, 8–10 minutes. Season with salt and pepper; add raisins, olives, and tomatoes. Cook until liquid has evaporated, about 20 minutes. Stir in remainder of ground cinnamon, almonds, and vinegar.



**GLÜHWEIN** 

(Spiced Wine) SERVES 4

Cinnamon is an essential ingredient in this German mulled wine, whose name means glow wine. This recipe is from *The German Cookbook* by Mimi Sheraton (Random House, 1965).

- 1 750-ml bottle medium-bodied red wine, such as zweigelt
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 8 whole cloves
- 4 lemon wedges
- 4 4" sticks cinnamon

Bring ingredients to a boil, stirring occasionally, in a 4-qt. saucepan and remove from heat. Discard cloves. Ladle wine into 4 glasses and garnish each with 1 of the cinnamon sticks and 1 lemon wedge. Serve hot.



#### **CINNAMON HARD CANDIES**

MAKES ABOUT 120 CANDIES Cinnamon oil or extract gives these confections a tongue-tingling heat.

- 11/2 cups sugar
  - 2 tbsp. light corn syrup
  - 1 tbsp. cinnamon extract or 1/2

# tsp. cinnamon oil (see page 99) 1/4 tsp. red food coloring

- 1 Line an 8" x 8" metal baking pan with parchment paper and grease parchment with nonstick spray; set aside. Heat sugar, corn syrup, and 1/2 cup water in a 1-qt. saucepan over high heat. Bring to a boil and cover; boil for 3 minutes. Remove lid and attach a candy thermometer to side of saucepan. Cook, without stirring, until sugar mixture reaches 300°; remove pan from heat. With a long-handled spoon, stir in the cinnamon extract and food coloring. Pour mixture onto prepared pan. Let cool slightly, until candy reaches pliable consistency. Using a pizza cutter or a knife, cut candy into 1/2" squares. Let cool for 30 minutes, until hard.
- 2 Peel candies off parchment paper and wrap individually in confectioner's paper (see page 99) or dust candies with a mixture of 1/4 cup powdered sugar and 1 tsp. ground cinnamon, if you like, and transfer to a bowl.



#### **SNICKERDOODLES**

MAKES 48 COOKIES

The ample amount of butter in these soft, chewy cookies draws out and enhances the flavor of the cinnamon.

- 3 cups flour
- 2 tsp. cream of tartar
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1/4 tsp. kosher salt
- 13/4 cups sugar
  - 16 tbsp. unsalted butter, at room temperature
  - 5 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 11/2 tsp. vanilla extract
  - 2 eggs
- 1 In a medium bowl, whisk together

flour, cream of tartar, baking soda, and salt; set aside. Using a handheld mixer on medium speed, beat 1½ cups sugar and the butter together in a medium bowl until pale and fluffy, 2 minutes. Add 2 tsp. cinnamon and the vanilla; beat for 1 minute more. Add eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. Add reserved dry ingredients; mix on low speed until just combined. Refrigerate dough for 30 minutes.

② Heat oven to 375°. Combine remaining sugar and cinnamon in a small bowl. Remove dough from refrigerator and, using a 1-tbsp. measure, spoon out 48 portions, rolling each portion into a 1" ball as you go. Roll each ball in cinnamon-sugar mixture to coat. Arrange dough balls 2" apart on 2 parchment paper-lined baking sheets. Bake until golden brown, about 10 minutes. Transfer to a rack and let cool.



#### **OPOR AYAM**

(Indonesian Chicken Curry) SERVES 4-6

In this dish, based on one in SAVEUR editor-in-chief James Oseland's *Cradle of Flavor* (W. W. Norton, 2006), cinnamon and lemongrass give the silky sauce fragrance and spiciness.

- 1 tbsp. coriander seeds
- 1/2 tsp. crushed red chile flakes
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- medium yellow onion, chopped
- 1 4" piece ginger, peeled and thinly sliced
- 3 tbsp. peanut oil
- 5 fresh or frozen Kaffir lime leaves (see page 99)
- 4-6 4" sticks cinnamon
  - 1 stalk lemongrass, tied into a knot (see page 94)
  - 3 lbs. chicken thighs and legs

#### CINNAMON

- 2 cups coconut milk
- 3/4 tsp. kosher salt
- 2 cups cooked jasmine rice, for serving
- Finely grind coriander and chile flakes in a spice grinder. Put spice mixture into a small food processor with garlic, onions, and ginger; purée to a paste. Add 1-2 tbsp. water, if necessary.
- Peat oil in a 5-gt. Dutch oven over medium-low heat. Add paste; cook, stirring frequently, until fragrant, 5-7 minutes. Add lime leaves, cinnamon, and lemongrass. Cook, stirring occasionally, until cinnamon is fragrant, about 2 minutes. Increase heat to medium, add chicken, and cook, turning once, until golden brown, 8-10 minutes. Stir in 1 cup coconut milk, 11/4 cups water, and salt. Simmer, stirring occasionally, until chicken is tender, 40-50 minutes. Add remaining coconut milk; cook for 2 minutes. Let cool for 20 minutes before serving with the rice.



# BAKED APPLES WITH CARAMEL SAUCE

SERVES 6

This recipe is based on one in Emily Luchetti's *Four-Star Desserts* (Harper Collins, 1996). We found that Fuji apples held their shape the best.

#### FOR THE BAKED APPLES:

- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup maple syrup
- 4 tbsp. unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 2 tbsp. ground cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp. kosher salt
- 6 firm Fuji apples, stemmed and cored Ice cream, for serving

#### FOR THE CARAMEL SAUCE:

- 11/2 cups sugar
- 1/3 cup heavy cream
- 1/2 cup raisins
- 2 tbsp. dark rum
- Make the baked apples: Heat oven to 325°. Combine sugar, syrup, butter, cinnamon, and salt in a bowl; set aside. Cut <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" from bottom of apples so that they sit flat; transfer apples to a 9" x 13" baking pan. Fill hollow cores with reserved sugarsyrup mixture. Cover apples with foil; bake until tender, about 50 minutes.
- ② Meanwhile, make the caramel sauce: Heat sugar and ½ cup water in a 2-qt. saucepan over mediumhigh heat. Cook, without stirring, until amber colored and a candy thermometer inserted into syrup reads 330°, about 20 minutes. Remove pan from heat; let cool slightly. Add cream (caramel will bubble up slightly). Stir in raisins and rum; set aside. Serve apples with caramel sauce and ice cream.



#### **CINNAMON COFFEE CAKE**

SERVES 8

Ground cinnamon gives the topping for this coffee cake its signature zing; the cake itself gets an extra boost of flavor from cinnamon extract.

- 16 tbsp. unsalted butter, melted, plus more for the pan
- 33/4 cups flour, plus more for pan
- 11/4 cups plus 2 tsp. sugar
  - 6 tbsp. plus 1½ tsp. packed light brown sugar
  - 2 tbsp. plus ½ tsp. ground cinnamon
- 11/4 tsp. kosher salt
- 1/3 cup finely chopped pecans
- 21/2 tsp. baking powder
  - 1 cup milk

- 6 tbsp. sour cream
- 21/4 tsp. vanilla extract
- 11/2 tsp. cinnamon extract
  - 2 eggs
- ⓐ Heat oven to 325°. Grease an 8" x 8" baking pan with a little butter and sprinkle with a little flour; set aside. Make topping: In a bowl, mix 8 tbsp. melted butter, ¼ cup sugar, 6 tbsp. brown sugar, 2 tbsp. ground cinnamon, and ½ tsp. salt until smooth. Add 1 ½ cups flour; mix with a fork until crumbly; chill. Make filling: In a bowl, mix remaining brown sugar, 2 tsp. sugar, ½ tsp. ground cinnamon, and pecans; set filling aside.
- Make cake batter: In another bowl, whisk together remaining flour, sugar, salt, and baking powder; set aside. In a large measuring cup, whisk together remaining butter, milk, sour cream, vanilla, cinnamon extract, and eggs until smooth. Pour wet ingredients over dry ingredients; whisk to combine. Pour half the batter into prepared baking pan. Sprinkle filling over top; pour remaining batter over it. Break up reserved topping with fingers; sprinkle over top; bake until a toothpick inserted into middle of cake comes out clean, about 1 hour 15 minutes. Let cool before serving.



#### **CINNAMON RICE PUDDING**

SERVES 8

Either cassia or cinnamon will work in this dessert, but true cinnamon makes a more harmonious match.

- 6 tbsp. raisins
- 1 tbsp. dark rum
- 6 tbsp. short-grain rice
- 1/4 tsp. kosher salt
- 2½ cups half-and-half
- 1/2 cup packed finely grated

panela or light brown sugar (see page 99)

- 2 4" sticks cinnamon
- 1 egg yolk, lightly beaten
- 3/4 tsp. vanilla extract Ground cinnamon, for garnish

In a bowl, combine raisins and rum; let soak for 30 minutes. Combine rice, salt, and 3/4 cup water in a 2-qt. heavy-bottomed saucepan over medium-high heat. Bring to a boil; stir; reduce heat to medium-low. Simmer, partially covered, until water is absorbed, 6-8 minutes. Stir in 2 cups half-and-half, panela, and cinnamon sticks and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low; simmer, stirring, until rice is tender, 20-25 minutes. Slowly stir in egg yolk; cook for 1 minute. Remove pan from heat; add raisins with rum, remaining half-and-half, and vanilla; let sit for 10 minutes. Spoon pudding into serving glasses; sprinkle with ground cinnamon.

# COOKING WITH

Ground cinnamon has a bolder flavor than whole cinnamon sticks do, and it releases that flavor more quickly. Accordingly, the powdered spice is best suited to quick-cooking foods: it can also be used toward the end of cooking to add zing to a dish. A whole cinnamon stick, on the other hand, is slow to give up its perfume, which tends to come through as a subtle accent rather than a dominant flavor. Cinnamon sticks work well in braised dishes like the Indonesian chicken curry on the facing page and in drinks like spiced wine (also on the facing page), in which ground cinnamon would overpower other flavors. Finally, keep in mind that fatwhether it's butter, cooking oil, or the marbling on a piece of meat helps activate cinnamon's flavor and also keeps that flavor from dissipating as a dish cooks. That's one reason why cinnamon performs well in butter-rich baked goods. It's also the principle behind the Indian technique called tarka: frying spices like whole cinnamon in clarified butter or oil to impart flavor to the fat before cooking with it. -Ben Mims



IN THE SAVEUR

# KITCHEN

Discoveries and Techniques from Our Favorite Room in the House » Edited by Todd Coleman



# Oven Ready

HEN WE SET out to test the recipe for the baked apples with caramel sauce on page 91, we followed conventional wisdom and used Granny Smith apples, a common baking variety. It turns out that conventional wisdom isn't always so wise. The apples in our first batch broke open; the ones in the second turned to mush. So, we decided to bake a single batch using all the varieties we could readily find-13 kinds in all. The results are pictured at left, and they held a few surprises. The McIntosh, considered a poor candidate for baking, came out of the oven in good shape (though, like the Red Delicious and Golden Delicious. it lost most of its flavor), while the Rome, supposedly a baking champion, burst, as did the Royal Gala and the Pink Lady. Of the lot, the Cortland and the Empire had the best flavor-sweet, with a lingering tartness-and a luscious but firm texture. I related our findings to Katherine Alford, a SAVEUR contributor and avowed apple fanatic. "A lot of apples cook best right off the tree," she said, surmising that our Granny Smiths and Romes may have been sitting on a truck or a supermarket shelf too long, which allowed them to overripen and made for weak, mushy flesh. The lesson? Go for young, tart, firm apples—ideally ones that are in season and grown nearby. —Ben Mims

ANDRÉ BARANOWSK

#### KITCHEN

# How to French a Rack of Lamb

WHOLE, UNTRIMMED RACK OF LAMB, like the one used in the recipe for rack of lamb with rosemary and thyme (see page 68), comes with a thick layer of fat and muscle extending along the back of the chops and up the rib bones. *Frenching* is the butchering term for trimming away that fatty layer, as well as some of the meat between the ribs, in order to achieve a more elegant presentation. Butchers and supermarkets sell pre-frenched cuts, but doing it yourself is simple and leaves you with flavorful scrap meat for soups and stews. Here's how. —*Hunter Lewis* 



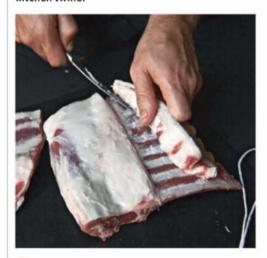
Start with a 3 ½-lb. untrimmed rack of lamb, a sharp boning knife, and a few 12" lengths of kitchen twine.



Remove the thick cap of muscle-streaked fat covering the chops by slicing along the seam and pulling away fat as you go.



3 Make a crosswise cut all the way across the fatty top side of the rib bones, as high or as low as you like (shown here at  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " above the rib chops).



Slip your blade under the crosswise cut, against the bone, and slice off the rectangular layer of fat, which should pull away from the ribs easily.



S Remove the strips of meat between the rib bones by cutting along inner edges of bones until you reach the crosswise cut.



Tie kitchen twine securely around the base of each bone and pull the twine outward to scrape off any remaining bits of meat or membrane.

Fit to Be Tied Lemongrass is a tough-fibered aromatic herb that's used as a flavoring in countless dishes in Southeast Asia, including ones like Indonesian chicken curry (see recipe, page 90). A stalk or two of the pale green herb infuses soups, braises, and curries with a citrusy taste. Lemongrass can be pounded to make spice pastes or finely sliced for salads, but it's often used in its whole form, in much the same way a bouquet garni is: dropped into the pot as a dish cooks and removed at the end. First, remove the tip and the root end and peel away the stalk's fibrous outer layers. Next, use a meat mallet (or, in a pinch, the back of a kitchen knife) to smash and bruise the stalk until it's pliable. Finally, tie the stalk into a knot (shown at right) and put it into the pot. —Sherry Rujikarn

ODD COLEMA!



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KITCHEN

# Where's the Mutton?

ORKING ON THE RECIPES FOR our feature "Understanding Lamb" (page 48) piqued my curiosity about lamb's close cousin mutton, which is the meat of a sheep that's more than two years old. Mutton remains popular in the Middle East, Great Britain, and France, and old cookbooks I consulted suggest that it used to be well loved in the United States, too. But this famously rich, robust meat is hard to come by these days in most parts of the country. I couldn't find a single butcher in New York City, where I live, who sells it, though I did know of one restaurant in town that has mutton on its menu: Keens Steakhouse, a 124-year-old establishment in midtown Manhattan that is famous for its 26-ounce broiled double mutton chop (pictured). When I asked Keens's executive sous-chef, Daniel Drucker, where he managed to find fresh mutton, he revealed a surprising truth. "It's not actually mutton," he said. "It's just older lamb." Then I remembered a story I read some years back about the

town of Owensboro, Kentucky, where barbecued mutton is a specialty. So, I tracked down Ken Bosley, a co-owner of Owensboro's busiest barbecue joint, the Moonlite Bar-B-Q. He confirmed that he serves real mutton, from sheep raised in Iowa-20,000 pounds of mutton a week, in fact, all of it cooked in a huge, hickory-fired pit smoker. "We'd have a riot if we ran out of mutton," Bosley said, explaining that the local love of the meat could be traced to 18th-century settlers from Wales, a country of fervent mutton lovers. I couldn't get down to Owensboro, so Bosley overnighted me a package of his slow-smoked mutton. It was meltingly tender and had a gamy, smoky tang and a matchless pungency. It was a meat worth searching for, and one that's overdue for a comeback. —H.L.

# Lamb's Best Friend

N A 1983 RESTAURANT review for the New York Times, the food writer Florence Fabricant asked, "[I]sn't it about time that restaurants stopped serving bright green mint jelly with lamb?" Granted, there are more subtly flavored accompaniments for grilled or roasted lamb (four fine sauces appear on page 69), but with all due respect to Fabricant, mint jellythat emerald-colored condiment that evolved from Great Britain's classic mint sauce and is typically made with spearmint, sugar, vinegar, pectin, apple juice, and food coloring-is still one of our favorites. After all, the refreshing taste of cool mint jelly is an ideal counterpoint to the

richness of a well-cooked leg or rack of lamb. In recent years, makers of artisanal fruit preserves in the UK have introduced all-natural versions of the condiment, a few of which are pictured below. Tracklements (third from left) and Rosebud Farm Preserves (second from right) are two fine examples; both have bright mint flavor and just the right amount of sweetness, albeit without the dazzling green color. For that, we reach for a jar of Crosse & Blackwell's old-fashioned mint-flavored apple jelly (third from right). A proper lamb feast just doesn't seem complete without it. (See THE PANTRY, page 99, for sources.) -Katherine Cancila

















# SAVEUR MENU

SAVEUR's guide to EVENTS, PROMOTIONS & PRODUCTS



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#### KITCHEN

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# THE PANTRY

#### A Guide to Resources

In producing the stories for this issue, we discovered food products and destinations too good to keep to ourselves. Please feel free to raid our pantry!

#### BY BEN MIMS

#### Fare

When in Philadelphia, visit Franklin Fountain (116 Market Street; 215/627-1899) to sample its decadent ice cream waffle sandwich. The Avignonesi Vin Santo di Montepulciano (\$170) can be purchased from Dalla Terra (707/259-5405; www.dallaterra.com). To go on an African safari, book a trip with Abercrombie & Kent (800/554-7016; www .abercrombiekent.com). When in Mississippi, visit Mugshots Grill & Bar (101 North Douglas Conner Street, Starkville; 662/324-3965); Mayflower Café (123 West Capitol Street, Jackson; 601/355-4122); The Crown (112 Front Street, Indianola; 662/887-4522); the Crystal Grill (423 Carrollton Avenue, Greenwood; 662/453-6530); Walnut Hills (1214 Adams Street, Vicksburg; 601/638-4910); Bruno's Café (895 Division Street, Biloxi: 228/432-2146); and Mississippi State University's MAFES Sales Store (925 Stone Boulevard, Mississippi State; 662/325-2338; www.msucheese.com) to purchase its ice cream and cheeses (the cheeses can also be mail-ordered via its website; see above).

#### **Book Review**

For a chance to win a copy of David Chang's cookbook *Momofuku*, enter the "Win This" sweepstakes, sponsored by SAVEUR, at www saveur.com/win between September 7, 2009 and October 12, 2009. The contest is open to residents of the 50 states of the United States and the District of Columbia ages 18 and older. No purchase is necessary; void where prohibited by law. For complete official rules, see our website.

#### Reporter

For more information on preserving **heirloom apple varieties**, go to www.raftalliance.org.

#### Drink

To try all our favorite **Italian beers**, contact B. United International Inc. (203/938-0713; www.bunitedint.com).

#### Lamb

Go to the websites of Mountain States Rosen (www.rosenlamb.com)—Henry Etcheverry's distributor—and Niman Ranch (www.niman ranch.com) to look for retailers of their lamb, or purchase cuts directly from D'Artagnan (800/327-8246; www.dartagnan.com) and Lobel's (877-783-4512; www.lobels.com). For lamb raised within your area, search www.local harvest.org. To make the seven-hour leg of lamb, use dried coco de Paimpol beans (\$9.99 for a 14-ounce bag), available from Kalustyan's (800/352-3451; www.kalustyans.com), which also carries harissa (\$6.99 for a 140-gram can) for the spiced lamb sausages.

#### Cinnamon

Many of the cinnamons and cassias, including the oil, buds, and leaves, featured in our glossary (page 86) are available from these sources: Atlantic Spice Company (800/316-7965; www.atlanticspice.com), Lemur International, Inc. (510/620-9708; www.lemurinc .com), the Spice House (847/328-3711; www .thespicehouse.com), Kalustyan's (see above), and Mr. Recipe (646/261-4460; mrrecipe@ gmail.com). To make the cinnamon hard candies, use confectioner's paper (\$8.45 for 200 4 1/4" x 5 1/2" sheets) from Sugarcraft (513/896-7089; www.sugarcraft.com). For the Indonesian chicken curry, use Kaffir lime leaves (\$6.99 for a 5-gram pack), available at Kalustyan's (see above), which also carries panela (\$6.99 for 8 ounces) for the cinnamon rice pudding.

#### Kitchen

**Moonlite Bar-B-Q**'s barbecued mutton can be ordered direct from the restaurant (800/322-8989; www.moonlite.com). Purchase **Rosebud** 

Farm Preserves mint jelly (\$9 for an 8-ounce jar) and Tracklements mint jelly (\$6 for a 5-ounce jar) from Belgravia Imports (800/848-1127; www.belgraviaimports.com). Contact Crosse & Blackwell (888/643-7219; www.crosseand blackwell.com) to buy its mint flavored apple jelly (\$5.30 for a 12-ounce jar).

# **Dixie Delights**

Here are a few of our favorite Mississippi products, found while we researched State Plates, on page 20.

#### Thames Foods Comeback Sauce

This spicy, rémouladelike dressing is great on salads and sandwiches

> and as a dip for fried shrimp (\$6 for a 12-ounce bottle; 601/613-0921; www .thamesfoods .com).

#### Original GritGirl Grits This Oxford-

based company grinds fresh grits to order. They're especially deli-



cious with melted cheese (\$13.25 for a 5-pound bag;

662/281-0510; www .gritgirl.net).

#### Hillside Vineyard Muscadine Jelly



Made from the popular sour grape native to the southeastern U.S., this jelly is divine spooned on warm biscuits with lots of butter (\$3.25 for a 10-ounce jar; 662/289-5037; www .hillsidevineyard.com).

#### Caramel Factory Icing This rich and nutty-tasting con-



fection is ideal for a proper Southern caramel

P. 99

cake (\$15 for two 22-ounce tubs; 662/745-8050; www .caramelfactory.com).

#### Kim's Processing Pork Rinds and Chicken Skins

Fried in cast-iron woks, these crunchy pork



cracklings and chicken skins are a snacker's delight (\$2 for a

4-ounce bag; 662/627-2389).

#### Corrections

David Rodriguez, the horticulturist quoted in our June/ July 2009 issue, is with Texas A&M System AgriLife Extension Service. In our August/September 2009 issue, habanero peppers should not be used as substitutes for the ajf dulce peppers in the shrimp ceviche recipe on page 33. The egg whites for the pavlova on page 48 should be beaten to soft and stiff peaks, according to the visual cues, rather than beaten for a set 14-minute period.

The paper used for this magazine comes from certified forests that are managed in a sustainable way to meet the social, eco- PEFC29-31-75 nomic, and environmental needs of present and future generations.

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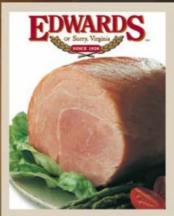
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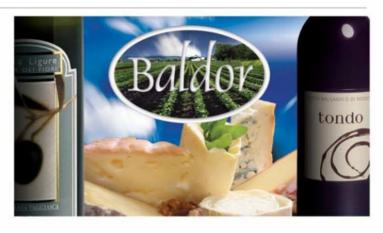




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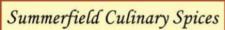
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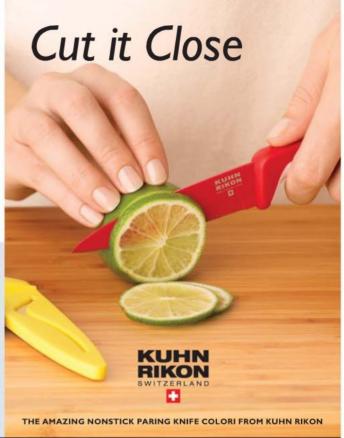


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